How Left Is The N.A

JULY 16 1935 10¢

new Masses

What Happened To Us In Cuba

By CLIFFORD ODETS

Love In Two Worlds

By ELLA WINTER

Our National Parks

By JULIA O'CONNOR

The Crisis in Italy

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New Masses

JULY 16, 1935

A. Redfield

We Help Win a Strike

ON Wednesday, July 3, a delegation of workers at Steinberg Press—the establishment which prints The New Masses—appealed to this magazine to support their strike. Thirty-five men had just walked out for higher wages and improved working conditions. Their weekly wage of $14 threw them below the barest subsistence minimum; conditions at the plant, they said, actually endangered their health. (One of their demands was for a water cooler.) Nicholas Danilla, one of the strike-leaders, had been discharged several days previously for union activity. This precipitated the walk-out. The strike committee had visited the employer, Mr. Harry Steinberg, who, as they said, "gave us no satisfaction." Instead, Mr. Steinberg rejected their demands by tearing up the round-robin statement of their grievances. The men thereupon threw a picket line around the building and, like all good fighters, sought allies. They sent representatives to some of the magazines printed in the plant—The New Masses, Fight, organ of the American League Against War and Fascism, and The New Republic. A delegation — representing The New Masses and Fight—visited Mr. Steinberg and notified him of their unconditional support of the strikers. In the meanwhile the firm brought scabs in. Our representatives made it clear to Mr. Steinberg that until the strike was settled—on terms acceptable to the men—we would not print at the plant, even though it endangered the publication of the next number. The staff and contributors of The New Masses held themselves in readiness to take their turn on the picket line. Publicity favorable to the strikers appeared in the press. The strikers read it and so did Mr. Steinberg.

THE strikers—known as fly-boys and bindery workers—were described by their employer as "errand boys." These "boys," most of them married men with families to support, kept up an unwavering picket line. All of them earned $14 a week—when and if they got a full week. By Friday Mr. Steinberg was ready to reinstate Danilla and to compromise on a general increase of $2 per week per man. He met the strikers' demands for collective bargaining. But the strikers were unsatisfied. They wanted, and needed, a greater increase to make ends meet. They held out, continuing picketing. Another meeting was arranged Saturday afternoon and the agreement completed—on terms considerably improving the strikers' lot. The fly-boys (engaged in a back-breaking job handling the magazines coming off the press—often as many as 5,600 an hour) won considerable gains: a wage increase of three dollars weekly for day work and five dollars weekly for night work. The men in the bindery won increases of two to four dollars weekly—from $14 to $16 for day work and $18 for night work. One worker, a man of fifty-five (a $14 a week "errand boy") who worked at the most difficult and tedious job of all, won an $8 increase.

THE A. F. of L. includes all the skilled workers in the printing trades. These men, listed as unskilled, had no union they could go to for help. They were not officially recognized as existent. The A. F. of L. had given the Steinberg Press a union label, as it does all establishments whose skilled workers are organized. The fly-boys and these bindery helpers are the only groups in the printing trades still unorganized. The Steinberg workers have now formed their own group, and seek admittance into the bookbinders section of the A. F. of L. Decision upon their request is pending. The New Masses, glad it was of service to the strikers,

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hails their victory as an important one in the printing trades, a victory which establishes a precedent and an example for a large unorganized group — a group badly exploited because it is unorganized.

Mussolini Decides on War

WHILE the U. S. State Department is "loathe to believe" that Mussolini could be so ungentlemanly as to "resort to other than pacific means" in dealing with Ethiopia, unofficially the government recognizes the imminence of war by "advising" citizens to leave Abyssinian territory. Washington refuses to invoke the Kellogg-Briand Pact and leaves the Negro State to resist aggression as best it may. Fascist honor still smarts under the Adowa defeat of almost forty years ago; Italy, so Mussolini thunders, "will not turn back." In face of this determination, Captain Eden, British Minister for League of Nations Affairs, found that his famous smile and tactful diplomacy got him nowhere in Rome. His suggestion that Italy pursue its drive "peacefully" did not please Il Duce; nor did the tentative offer of a slice of British Somaliland as recompense to Ethiopia in the event of Italian occupation of certain areas intrigue Mussolini. It is apparent that the internal situation forces him to gamble on a favorable outcome of the African adventure. An article in this issue outlines the tension and oppression in Italy brought about by an economy that has been declining for the last eight years.

PLANS for war have thrown European diplomats into complete confusion. England has lost French support by precipitously signing the naval agreement with Germany. The British attempt to bluff Italy by threatening an economic blockade and boycott fell through the same day it was made. France is willing to support Mussolini's dream of an expanded African empire in exchange for backing of French resistance to Austro-German *anschluss;* yet France fears that the withdrawal of troops from Europe at the present time and the preoccupation of Italy in what promises to be a strenuous and difficult undertaking does much to strengthen the growth of German fascism in Austria. Italy's already tottering financial condition will be undermined. And so, the problem is shifted to the League, which is powerless to act because France and England are unwilling and unable to cooperate. Meanwhile, Ethiopia waits for the invasion to begin. Unwilling to fight, it has no hope in decisive action by the League and knows that Italian troops will begin to move into Abyssinia in early fall when the rainy season ends. Ethiopia is by no means defenseless: Mussolini is in for an arduous campaign the outcome of which cannot be predicted. One thing is certain—the Italo-Abyssinian conflict carries within itself the seeds of another general holocaust, starting with the death of the League of Nations.

Herr Goebbels—Nazi Wit

OVER 50,000 postcards arrived in Germany to greet Ernst Thaelmann on his birthday, June 5. Herr Goebbels, Minister of Public Enlightenment, saw to it that they were "lost." He also delivered himself of a few Nazi witticisms: "The Communists across the big sea are more concerned with themselves and their own economic affairs than to lay out a stamp for a certain Thaelmann"—an outright lie to avoid responsibility for the refusal of the Nazis to deliver the mail. He added that had these postcards arrived "we might have sent . . . Teddy [to the U.S.A.] in a bright red cockade as a delicate thank you. . . . But they wouldn't let him off in New York." The Nazi Minister has been reading his colleague Hearst. But many thousands of workers have answered with an invitation that Thaelmann be released from prison and torture and sent to this country. The Anti-Nazi Federation, backed by the United Anti-Nazi Conference which recently met in New York, is organizing a drive for 100,000 postcards to be sent Herr Goebbels with the demand that Thaelmann and other anti-Nazis be released. Replicas of signatures will be taken to the State Department to make sure of a visa for Thaelmann. America has as a basic tradition the right of refuge for political prisoners. The same right must be extended to Thaelmann and all others who have suffered in Nazi dungeons for opposing the brutality and terror of the Third Reich.

Money Isn't Wealth—Ford

HENRY FORD, after sweating the guts out of tens of thousands of Ford workers for the past quarter-century in the acquisition of his billion-dollar fortune, has now discovered that mere money is relatively unimportant—"it may represent wealth, but is not wealth itself." "What," blandly inquires Henry, "would the people who propose to share the wealth do with an organization such as ours? Should the machinery be confiscated and divided among those who have no machinery, or should the place be taken over and run by theorists or politicians? How long do you think it would last under such conditions? Not one proposer of the share-the-wealth idea has taken the trouble to explain how an organization such as ours might be taken over and divided and still remain a source of national wealth."

WE ARE not among the proponents of Huey Long's quack remedies but we will, nevertheless, "take the trouble to explain" for Henry's benefit that the automobile and tractor factories in Soviet Russia are doing very nicely without the master-mind assistance of a single capitalist. Also, we are reliably informed, there has been not one instance of machinery-dismantling and dividing up the nuts and bolts. In fact they are so busy putting new machines together and running them so well, that the production figures are positively sensational—23,789 cars in 1932; 49,729 in 1933; 72,000 in 1934. And in 1935 they are turning out 97,000 tractors and 92,000 motor cars. Workers, it appears, just aren't silly enough to dismantle their *own* valuable machinery. Such weird performances are the exclusive prerogative of practical master-mind capitalists. When you want a good thorough-going job of livestock destruction or a bumper crop of cotton plowed under or a plantful of good machinery scrapped you'll find all the best experts at this business listed in the Directory of Directors.

Teachers Fight Back

AMERICAN educators are beginning to fight back. That was made plain at the annual convention of the National Education Association held at Denver last week. An organized opposition forced through a resolution committing the N.E.A. to cooperation with other agencies in "maintaining the principles of academic freedom." A committee of five, three of whom are to be classroom teachers, is to be named to combat laws aimed at freedom of teaching; to investigate cases of teachers discharged in violation of this principle and to assist such teachers. This step was fought bitterly by the little clique of superintendents and officials

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who have run the organization for years and who refused firmly at their February meeting to take any defense moves whatever. Another committee to study sex, color and race discriminations was named and military training in public schools was condemned. Speakers who gauged the temper of the gathering demanded "training suited to modern day needs" and advised teachers to participate in "the making of vital political, economic and social decisions." These steps do not square with another resolution praising the Civilian Conservation Corps which indicates that the teachers have not yet seen their problem in its entire perspective. If they override their leaders and launch a real fight for academic freedom they will learn that theirs is a struggle which must be linked up with similar struggles now being waged all over America.

Herndon on Tour

ANGELO HERNDON is now making a tour of the country in a truck which is a replica of the cages used to transport Georgia's chain-gang prisoners to the road camps where they are employed under the state's infamous prison system. John L. Spivak supervised the building and equipping of the truck which was planned to give the country an exact idea of what awaits Herndon if the Supreme Court refuses to reverse the twenty-year sentence given him under an old slave law. Photostatic copies of prison records which reveal the brutalities of guards and other photographs depicting prisoners being tortured will be shown wherever the truck goes. In an effort to make public sentiment effective the International Labor Defense is circulating petitions urging the freedom of Herndon and the repeal of the law under which he was convicted.

A Patriot Revises the Census

REPRESENTATIVE Martin Dies does not do things by halves. And he is evidently impressed by current talk about an "economy of plenty" when he estimates that there are 3,500,000 aliens illegally in this country. Mr. Dies has announced a plan to enroll ten million native-born and naturalized citizens in an organization entitled "The Americans." It would be up to this group to bring pressure on Congress in favor of Mr. Dies' deportation bills, in the framing of which he is so prolific. But official figures supplied by the Bureau of Census and the Department of Labor put the number of immigrants illegally in the U. S. as "probably less than 100,000." The total number of non-citizens, whom Mr. Dies would force to apply for citizenship within twelve months or pay the penalty of deportation, is less than five million. Super-patriotic Mr. Dies, along with Dickstein and others who have suddenly decided that Hearst's "Americanism" is the thing of the hour, wants labor to forget that the men who fought for independence in 1776 were willing to lay down their lives that this country might become an asylum for the oppressed and persecuted of the world.

America's Youth Meet

DR. WARD'S speech before the Second American Youth Congress stressed one point above all others: "A new social order will not come through love—a struggle must be conducted for it." When Dr. Ward, representing the American League Against War and Fascism, ended his talk, the audience of over 2,000 rose and applauded enthusiastically. Youth today knows that there are no jobs for the majority, that if one is fortunate to get employment or relief, he is facing a starvation standard of living with not even a slim chance of improvement. And at the Detroit Youth Congress, young men and women pledged themselves to fight war and fascism which they realize are nourished and bred by the capitalist system. Organizations at the Congress included representatives from fraternal orders, trade unions (over 157, of which 93 belonged to the A. F. of L.) churches, settlement houses, social and cultural groups, student organizations and the Y.M.C.A. and the Y.W.C.A. In all, over 1,280 attended the Congress as delegates with credentials—they will return to their organizations with reports of the discussions at the Congress and the resolutions adopted. Their answer to the "Americanism" of Hearst, Green and their fellow jingoes is the true Americanism endorsed by the Congress—the Americanism based on anti-fascism and designed to build a better society.

Revising the Elephant

THE Republican party is having troubles of its own. To a regional conference meeting this week in Cleveland, Chairman Henry P. Fletcher sent this stirring message:

> Demagogy is not democracy. Class hatred is not American. The Republican Party does not want to go back, neither

New Masses

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> does it want to go Russian. It wants to go forward under the Constitution, with justice to all and "with malice toward none." A decent job with self-reliance and self-respect is a better guarantee of happy days than doled depreciated dollars.

To the uninitiated this may sound like so much gibberish but others will recognize it as Fletcher's desperate attempt to heal a rapidly developing breach in the G.O.P. The smartest Republican politicians are determined to throw Herbert Hoover overboard and are seeking to cover up their reactionary outlook by nominating a "liberal" such as Borah, who is apparently quite receptive. The Tories on the other hand want to take a stand with Hoover and fight the 1936 battle on a straight out appeal to the conservatives. They hope that Huey Long or someone of his kind will run and draw enough votes to permit them to sneak in. The bankers who run the Republican Party are playing their old "heads-I-win-tails-you-lose" game with the American workers and farmers.

Ryan Fights for His Job

JOSEPH RYAN, president of the International Longshoremen's Association, is staging a bitter fight to retain his official position as the national convention of the union meets in New York this week. Discontent with Ryan's leadership has been brewing ever since his attempt to settle the Pacific Coast strike last year over the heads of western strike leaders. He devoted a great part of his keynote speech to an attack on Communists, the Soviet Union and the rank and file in his own organization. While a representative of the employers' New York Shipping Association sat on the platform at his invitation, Ryan protested his undying devotion to the cause of labor. Later he announced that he would have a corps of policemen at the sessions to enforce "order." The object of Ryan's wrath was Harry Bridges, Pacific Coast waterfront leader, who came to New York with a mandate from western locals to oust Ryan if that is possible. Bridges' description of conditions on the west coast drew a sharp contrast with those prevailing in the sections where Ryan's leadership is unchallenged. Employers do not visit western longshoremen's conventions, Bridges told reporters. West Coast workers have a much better working agreement than eastern workers. Ryan is being opposed because of his refusal to support the Pacific strike, reporters were reminded. As for Communism, Bridges was very direct: "If it's Communistic to act together and to favor united action, then all longshoremen on the West Coast are Communistic."

Curtain Over Cuba

THE reign of violence against the Cuban working class and students is reaching heights new even for the terrorist Mendieta-Batista tyrants who are carrying it on. The more the rule of jailings, of tortures, of killings is intensified in the effort to crush the masses, the greater the necessity of keeping a curtain of censorship over them, for fear the workers of other lands, learning the plight of their Cuban fellow-workers, rise to their support. That is the reason why last week the Cuban dictators at the point of machine-guns incarcerated the American Delegation to Cuba, numbering fifteen, and deported them, thus forcibly preventing them from carrying out their mission to investigate conditions in Cuba and report the facts to the American people. Clifford Odets, one of their number, describes the delegation's experiences with the Cuban terrorists in this issue.

THE terror that met the committee, which represented numerous large organizations in the United States, was, of course, but a fraction of that prevailing in Cuba and was invoked in a clumsy attempt to prevent detailed disclosures of it outside. United States diplomatic officials, always on the side of the Wall Street interests exploiting Cuba through their puppets, Mendieta and Batista, connived at the brutality, as they support the rule of blood and iron directed against the masses. A single word from them would have set the delegation free to pursue their inquiry; their silence amounted to open approval of the arrests and deportations. It cannot be but with their blessing, also, that the army has started an offensive against Realengo 18, "the first Soviet in America," recently described in The NEW MASSES by Josephine Herbst, who in this issue tells more of the life of the peasants who established it. Yet the ruthlessness of the rulers is not achieving its ends. The workers' revolt against the oppressors is gaining, and news of it keeps spreading outside of the terror-gripped island. Even the soldiers are rebelling: many of them refused to shoot "our brothers" when the first skirmish against the population of Realengo 18 was ordered.

Scottsboro and Equality

THE recent Scottsboro decision dealt a heavy blow to the entire Jim Crow system of the South. The case has been cited as legal precedent in at least nine court battles but it has had an even greater effect in the larger realm of political action. "The Negro question will appear intermittently now since the Scottsboro decision," Birmingham's Commissioner Robinson observed at the time.

The Commissioner was right. At its spring session the legislature considered a civil service bill and the merits of the measure were forgotten while legislators attacked the measure on the ground that it might permit qualified Negroes to hold city and county jobs. "The proposed City-County Civil Service bill will . . . raise the question of social equality for the two races. . . . An appeal to the Supreme Court would certainly result in a decision favorable to the Negro," Robinson warned. Wilkinson, Klan politician, stated:

> I have said, and I repeat that the civil service bill will Negroize . . . public jobs in Jefferson county. I make no apology for saying that. The senator would laugh off the menace of opening every public job in the court house and city hall to Negroes. . . . I wonder why he does not laugh off the Scottsboro decision.

The Alabama Herald, a Klan organ, was equally vehement. In an editorial attack on the bill it fulminated:

> It [the measure] opens every job in the court house and city hall to Negroes, Democrats and Republicans alike. The United States Supreme Court was definitely on the side of the Negro in the Scottsboro cases.

The legislature also had before it a bill to permit restoration of franchise rights on the payment of three years' back poll taxes. Again the Scottsboro decision played a part. "The poll tax measure brought about the most heated floor fight of the present session as more than twenty-five members spoke

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for or against the proposal, bringing into debate the Scottsboro decision and social equality," The Birmingham Age-Herald reported on June 4.

The decision recently loomed large in an entirely different sphere. The Provident Life Insurance Company of Philadelphia foreclosed on a large apartment house in Birmingham and leased the building to Negroes. When the families began to move in they were prevented from doing so by city police. The insurance company sought and obtained an injunction in the federal district court restraining such interference. Robinson was outraged and issued a vitriolic blast against "Yankee corporations" that dare to "disrupt the prevailing friendship existing between the whites and Negroes in the South." He went on to predict bloodshed and warned the courts that "the South does not look upon the Supreme Court's decision in the Scottsboro case . . . as a matter of law."

In the apartment house case Robinson outlined the manner in which the South proposes to circumvent the decision when he said:

> Tradition is one of the noblest and endearing of laws. Tradition and custom have always been the supreme law of Dixie.
>
> Relations between the white and Negro races have been a fixed social law, based entirely upon traditions and not legal powers.
>
> The North has dealt with the Negro problem after its own established fashion. The South has met the situation as it saw fit.
>
> As I have said before, we in the South do not consider the constitutionality of the various Negro problems.

There is a lesson in these brutally frank statements for those who have tried to coerce the International Labor Defense into fighting the Scottsboro case on strictly legal grounds. It must be very plain by this time that the Southern rulers have no intention of abiding by any court decision that does not accord with their "traditional" treatment of Negroes. If the legal victories are to have any significance at all the fight must be broadened rather than restricted.

Hearings on the application for bail by Willie Robertson and Olen Montgomery, two of the boys, have been set for the very near future. The Alabama law provides that bail may be set where there is a presumption of innocence. It was of these two boys that Judge Horton said the "evidence was unbelievable." Immediately following the bail hearing, the two youngest boys, Roy Wright and Eugene Williams, will appear for trial in the juvenile court. The International Labor Defense has carefully prepared the legal groundwork in these cases. It remains for friends and sympathizers to mass enough public opinion to break through that "tradition and custom that have always been the supreme law of Dixie." Protest enough will force the Alabama jurists to square traditional rights with constitutional guarantees.

An Exclusive Labor Party

POLITICAL adventurers are hard at work trying to divert mass sentiment for the formation of a Labor Party to their private ends. Led by Professor Paul Douglas and Alfred Bingham a group, proud of its so-called native American radicalism, has just completed deliberations at Chicago. A platform was outlined and plans made to call a convention in the fall.

Among those active at the gathering were Congressman Thomas Amlie of the Wisconsin Progressives, Howard Y. Williams of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor party and a number of others, some of whom were honestly seeking a way out while others were evidently fishing in troubled waters for personal reasons. Among the latter was Senator Gerald P. Nye who did a nice job of patting Roosevelt on the back with his right hand and extending the left hand of fellowship to the dissenters. Another group is meeting in Omaha this week with the prospect that Huey Long's candidacy may be formally launched there.

The platform adopted at Chicago is a mass of vague pleasantries evidently conjured up with the hope that it will attract all of the dissatisfied. One plank calls for "production for use," a phrase that proved a good vote-getter for Upton Sinclair last fall. The demand for "the payment of high wages to all of those at work" is strangely reminiscent of Mark Hanna's full dinner pail. Not a word about Negroes was included. Other planks are equally as hard to define. This lofty vagueness is easy to understand in view of the bitter attacks on Communists led by Lillian Herstein of the Teachers Federation and Adolph Germer, war time secretary of the Socialist Party. They were ably seconded by other politicians, one of whom declared that every Communist in the organization would "cost ten thousand votes." Evidently the new (?) party is looking for votes above all else.

The effort to convert the Chicago gathering into a meaningless political pow-wow did not go unchallenged. A Kansas farmer told the delegates that if he were a worker he would be a Communist and the conference refused formally to bar Communists. Finally Congressman Vito Marcantonio and the Knickerbocker Democratic club of New York withdrew from the conference. The Knickerbocker spokesman pointed out the futility of trying to dodge the Red label and minced no words in saying that a "genuine third party must be a labor party, drawing its support from the ranks of organized labor, organizations of the unemployed, people on relief, the farmers, the veterans and the Negroes."

The battle to keep the Communists out of a Labor Party is more than a quixotic fear of the word itself. It displays a determination to tear a third party from its working-class base and make of it just another vehicle for personal ambitions. Such movements bulwarked behind radical phrases, are the stuff out of which fascism comes. Insincere and confused third party advocates do not want Communists in their party because they know the Communist Party is the prime mover in the drive for a real Labor movement. It will be that force to balk their schemes and keep the organization to its task of fighting for workers' and farmers' interests.

Every indication shows that the workers are not blind to these facts. Both in Detroit and Connecticut organized workers have taken the lead and laid the basis for real political action. A Labor Party will be in the field by 1936. Workers and farmers and their friends must redouble their vigilance to see to it that the party is a genuine one built on the widest united-front basis and serving "organized labor, organizations of the unemployed, people on relief, the farmers, the veterans and the Negroes."

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William Gropper

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What Happened to Us in Cuba

CLIFFORD ODETS

"HAVANA welcomes you—blithe, debonair . . . and big-hearted! Havana is never selfish about her myriad diversions . . . she offers them all to you, bids you welcome as one of her own."

For these gracious remarks concerning our Commission of Investigation to Cuba, we had the word of the tourist pamphlet handed us as we sat in the understaffed dining room of the S.S. Oriente, queen of the Ward Line fleet.

However, our delegation had its own ideas about how Havana might welcome an honest investigation commission. We said to ourselves that if the Cuban authorities permitted us to enter Cuba unmolested, then indeed there must be something rotten in our hearts. We were waiting to see.

One hour from Havana we were lining the ship's rail. We had already gotten medical advice in reference to malaria and typhoid, not to mention several varieties of dysentery. Plenty of disease in Cuba's interior. Bottles of pills in our luggage. The entire delegation of fifteen members more anxious than they cared to admit. Investigating a military dictatorship of high finance is no joke.

Night was coming on when we sighted the low warm hills of the island. If one might only be able to relax to enjoy this fertile scene, as, for example, the ordinary cruise passengers were doing, most of them loaded with rum and rich food. Finally, the port of Havana, vaguely familiar. Sure, looking like a Radio City stage set, unreal, incredible. The ship's band began to play, alternating between fancy rumbas and American jazz. The tourists began to cheer as the ship slipped past Morro Castle fort, a vile relic of the past, filled at present with many of the four thousand political prisoners of Cuba.

Havana from a ship looks like what you bring to it. If you're there to buy perfume cheaply, to drink at the infamous bars, to tickle a cutie under the chin—some of them in virtual bondage from the age of thirteen on —then you're set for a good time. But if you look at the place with clear honest eyes your nose will tell you what your eyes miss.

While the ship was being tied to the dock we stayed on the opposite side. One of our members followed the passengers to the other side but speedily returned with the information that the dock was swarming with police. Several of the men, he said, looked like reporters. I shifted news releases from inside pocket to out. The band kept up the hot rumba stuff.

The first man on board was the tour manager. For three dollars all the passengers were going to have the time of their lives. A fat guy, he was, who knew how to make night club sound like a brothel. Our American brothers and sisters squirmed with anticipation. It was very hot, it was very noisy, the air palpitated with fever. Ropes rained through the air; the whistle blew. We were looking for the welcoming delegation which must, we knew, be waiting for us—unless! (Unless it was—fifty of them arrested, we learned later.)

A steward wormed through the crowd to my side. Would the entire delegation assemble in the smoking room. We would and did. So did a dozen newspaper men and photographers — suddenly, from nowhere, shoving cards in my hands because I was the chairman of the delegation—nice fellows, but beagles on the scent, news-crazy. I passed out releases a mile a minute. We had them in Spanish and English. Out of the corner of my eye I saw plainclothesmen pushing the camera men from the room. Scores of curious awed tourists were watching us from the outside decks.

I began to realize that the smoking room was now crowded with police. A fat fierce Cuban suddenly jerked one of our Negro delegates up from a chair and in one second would have hurled him across the room had not several others intervened. These boys understood a black skin with no questions asked! The newspaper men asked hundreds of questions. Armed men pressed us on all sides: the whole thing was ridiculous and dangerous. One man finally said, actually like a hissing snake, "You can not land here!" They took our names and addresses. Our landing cards were wrenched from our hands. Several men carrying sub-machine-guns, one in a straw hat, overalls and black shirt, paraded around us without stop. Telegram boys were allowed in the room. The executive committee of the delegation quickly wrote out a dozen cables, back to friends in the United States, to Mister Mendieta, to Mister Caffery, demanding immediate aid, demanding the right to land in Cuba. These were paid for at good juicy prices but never delivered.

The ship's officers would give us no aid. Later the captain explained, "By golly, I never seen nothing much like this before." Permission to phone to American government officials in Cuba was denied. We learned afterward, too, that a Mister Connelly of the American Embassy came to meet the ship but kept away from our imprisoned party with real religious fervour. Even the Ward line representative in Havana hugged the outside of the door, making goo-goo eyes from that safe spot.

Several factions of police were quarreling amongst themselves. Who was to have charge of us? They were all eager for the honor. Later we learned from a press association man that our lives had been in constant danger for the first hour of our detention. This is what happened, according to him.

"I saw you were in the hands of the National police," he said, "the toughest bunch on the island. Through revolutionary groups their outfit has lost more lives than any of the others. When they hear the word 'radical' they go nuts, shoot first and ask afterwards. I immediately got in touch with Caffery and informed him of the facts. Told him you were a well-known playwright in the states, that hell would pop if they hurt you. Caffery immediately phoned the authorities. Told them to place you in the hands of the port police, a milder gang, used only to the rigors of the tourist trade."

That, in fact, is what happened. The room slowly drained off most of the gunmen with the cute straw hats. In orderly fashion we were marched off the boat. Every five minutes they stopped to count us. The count was always seventeen (two tourist school teachers had been added to us by mistake).

Our luggage was waiting for police inspection. Much of it had already been opened. (Don't think it hadn't been tampered with while the ship was still at sea!) Innocent papers, notes and books were gleefully pounced upon as "Communist literature." Four copies of the Foreign Policy Association's report, "Problems of The New Cuba," were found with many elated cries. Actually officers congratulated one another on finding these reports which were made at Mister Mendieta's request and can be purchased in any Havana book store.

Significantly, scores of secret agents there were dressed as workers. One of them, a fat boy of moronic disposition, pulled out of his pocket a membership card of Joven Cuba, a revolutionary organization, kissed it with a flourish, gave us a Communist salute and laughed like an idiot. Agent provocateur.

Sexy appraisals of our girls went on all the time. The gun-loaded boys kept playing with their crotches in a suggestive manner. The girls with blonde hair entranced them. Surely blonde hair must be an old dream with them. Except for The Times man, the newspaper men stayed with us yet. Our delegate Shaffer was subjected to extra examination and frisking. The mechanical parts of his false leg were thought to be concealed weapons. Little detectives flitted around in the heat, kept counting us, kept poking fingers. One of them picked up my copy of *War and Peace*. "Very good book," said he. One of

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them kept insisting I was a Russian. The length of my hair told him this fact.

He had made a brilliant discovery and wanted his comrades to know it. Going across the bay in a police launch, under the watchful muzzles of three sub-machine guns, he crowed over his discovery. In the Cuban night we were marched a mile up a hill under heavy armed guards. Every other minute they stopped to take count. Mysterious people looked at us from cracks in walls and doors. Wide-eyed Cubans were whipped out of our paths with rifle butts. We finally checked in at a kind of a police station. A clerk laboriously spelled out our names for the official records. We began to realize, coming out of the assault with some degree of relaxation, that not once had we been questioned or examined; that we were guilty of no known charge; that the American consulate had not come to our aid in any manner; that we were so securely bottled up that no communicaion was possible with the outside world except the word the newspaper men had already sent out.

The jail was a concrete barrack, second floor, one side for women, one for us, each facing a center plaza with tropical trees. The guard kept asking us our impression of the jail: "Bueno, bueno?" he insisted. Stinks, I thought. It did. Open wide to malaria mosquitoes, bare springs covered with gunny sacking to sleep on, water poisonous with chlorine, a guard of four rifle-armed marines.

A khaki-clad captain suddenly became abusive towards Griffin of the I.L.D. He was waiting for one word to be answered. Finally we were allowed the privilege of trying to sleep on those wire bunks. In the morning, a pail of stuff euphemized as coffee, but permission to purchase sandwiches and cigarettes. Undernourished natives were very anxious to run errands for us.

All this time I was trying to get a phone into the American consulate. Permission not granted. Finally, at one in the broiling afternoon, I got the vice-consul on the wire. Said he knew nothing about the affair. The Cuban papers had our arrest streaming on their front pages, but this wet smack knew nothing about it! At three in the afternoon he came up to see us. His statement gave us our first laugh in twenty hours. "Well, evidently the Cuban government doesn't want you here," he said. He also assured us that our own government did the same thing to aliens at Ellis Island. Could I send a cable to a New York newspaper for which I was acting as special correspondent? He would have to ask the Cuban government. What the hell were we here for? Have to ask the Cuban government. Where was our baggage and confiscated material? Would have to ask them. We began to understand clearly that this wet smack was perhaps working for the Cuban government instead of fifteen American citizens who were being denied every right. Could he find out from his sweet Cuban government why we had been assaulted and imprisoned. Ah no, for the Cuban immigration offices had decided to be closed on this weekday afternoon.

At four in the afternoon this Edgar gent called to say that he had heard unofficially that we were to be deported that night—sent back on the same ship, sent back to where we came from. For what reason? He became coy: "Don't you know?" he asked. Furthermore he would see that we got our baggage back.

And so it happened. After a supper of bean soup we began to be marched down the hill to the bay in a tropical shower. Paul Crosbie refused to walk in the rain. They obliged with an old auto which took us to the police launch. There, for the second time, a member of a revolutionary party secretly contacted us with greetings. Under the nose of the police this one dared death by lifting his arm in a Communist salute as the boat pulled out. Before, in the afternoon, two young men dropped a note for us in front of the police station. Written on it was the one word "Salud," greetings from the Cuban I.L.D.

Returned to the ship we were again herded in one room and met by the American consul general, one Cameron, who trembled as he spoke. Beyond assuring us that our luggage was taken care of he had nothing else to say. Our intercepted cables had cost us almost thirty dollars; he assured us the Western Union would refund us six fifty. Armed police guarded us until the last minute. The gentlemen of the press were with us again. We gave them a clear statement of our position. In both statements and special cables we referred to the fifty Cuban intellectuals and workers who had been arrested in our behalf. This is how we summed up our adventure:

"This impartial commission of investigation has shown its sincerity of purpose by being honored by deportation by the present Cuban military dictatorship in collusion with American embassy officials; their collusion is clearly marked out by their negative response to our call for help.

"Despite the sharp physical termination of the work of our Commission, we have revealed several valuable facts. The crude actions of the Cuban government and the American embassy make clear the fear on their part of honest investigation. By this deed of deporting us at the point of scores of rifles and sub-machine guns, they have shown the blackest partiality in favor of concealing from the world the horrible conditions under which the majority of the Cuban people exist. The feverish terror directed against us is the merest shadow of the horror directed against Cuban workers, intellectuals and liberals. Our return must mark these facts indelibly and forever in the minds of the American people."

As the boat turned back towards New York many of us stood at the rail. On the upper dock stood our old friend, the black-shirted machine gunner. The ship's band was striking up a rumba again. On the long empty expanse of dock a small boy was playing with rumba rattles, singing for a few pennies. A girl, one of our delegates, began to cry a little. I turned away from the rail, a little heartsick for the delegation, for the thousands of enslaved brothers in Cuba.

But when we met together after the ship had put to sea we understood that our work had not stopped there. We knew plenty of work was cut out for us when we arrived in New York. And we knew we would organize another delegation to visit Cuba!

A Passport from Realengo 18

JOSEPHINE HERBST

ON THE earthen floor of the house of the poet of Realengo 18, one of the Realengo men draws with a stick a map of Cuba. The hardbaked earth swept clean with a broom makes a good blackboard. He shapes the island and we stare at its smallness that is now being related to the world. Outlines of the United States take shape roughly. There is an ocean, Europe and a sudden great bulge of the stick moved by an inspired curve makes the Soviet Union. Everyone in the room smiles. Jaime, the actor, turned Realengo farmer these ten years, says excitedly that in my pocketbook I carry a passport that has a visa from the Soviet Union upon it. Two little girls sitting together on a narrow bench keep their seats, everyone else crowds forward. The passport goes from hand to hand.

Through the doorway is a view down the valley. We are very high on top of the world in Realengo. We are in the midst of steep cultivated mountains with banana and tobacco growing in regular rows. Around these cultivated patches virgin forest bristles in tough areas. Realengo 18 feels somewhat protected by its location, by its difficult trails too narrow for the artillery of an army. Last August airplanes whirled overhead looking for places to drop bombs. Now four men of Realengo are gravely studying the map of Cuba on the floor and they are looking at my visa from the Soviet Union.

They stare slowly at the visa and pass it from hand to hand. Someone picks out the tiny hammer and sickle on the seal. Jaime says that there ought to be a visa from the Soviet of Realengo 18. He says there are

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plenty of blank pages and I should certainly have a visa from the first Soviet on the North American continent. The visa has changed the atmosphere of the room in a moment. Realengo 18 is a small spot on a small island and we have been discussing the problems of this island, its relation to the world. Every person in the room has been weighed down with the great bulk of the United States pressing from above on that map drawn upon the floor. We have been looking at the map and feeling the powers that are against this small island in its battle for freedom. The visa is a kind of magic that restores everyone.

The wife of the poet gets up briskly and makes some coffee. She serves it in tiny cups with sugar-cane juice. Though this island is devoted to sugar, there is no sugar here, only the juice of the cane pressed out with a rude handmade machine of logs. Sugar sells, is not eaten, is not made in Realengo. Jaime, who has traveled in his day and knows the ports of South America, loves my passport. He keeps looking at it and insisting that I get a visa from Realengo. They are now discussing it gravely and the question is to be taken up with the secretary. After that it will be taken up with the president, Lino Alvarez. A stir and bustle of business and the relation of this tiny spot to the great one-sixth of the world where the Soviet Union flourishes changes the entire mood of the party. We get on horseback again and start out over the trails.

In Realengo 18 it is not possible just to travel. In every hut is a Realengo man who wants the news. I am a stranger in a pair of overalls and a blue workshirt sitting astride a very bony and mangy horse. This only lasts a moment. The next moment I am in the house, we are smiling and talking. The man of the house may be very ill of malaria. This sickness is a terrific scourge in Realengo where the outside world seems never to have come except for plunder. Agents from the big sugar mills below penetrate Realengo 18 on horseback wearing very white starched clothes, riding haughtily with whips in their hands and guns on their hips. Realengo men passing on their own humble horses never speak to these emissaries. The silent procession goes past the rider whose spying eyes look sharply. Contempt is thick in the air as the invader disappears. Realengo men exchange glances; someone spits loudly and with fury. Not a word may be spoken until we are in the house of the sick man whose bright feverish eyes want all the news. From what deep source does this talk about politics and history come? Their own struggle to hold the land to which they have given so much labor is the answer.

There isn't a hut that must not have a look at the visa. It is taken out, passed shyly, delightedly; again the question of putting a Realengo visa in the book is seriously pondered. An old woman cannot stop her tirade against the spies sent in by the sugar companies long enough to look but her son thrusts it under her nose. She cannot read, few can, yet those who do read talk much. They explain, going over and over the situation in the world, relating it to this little world of Realengo 18. They are practical people, not romanticists, not Rousseaueans. They know that they need more than the fighting men of Realengo to keep their land and be free, they need more than Cuba.

Doves strut around cooing. The little pigs hunt frantically for bits of food, nuzzle each other's hide searching for crumbs. A lean and hungry look is in this fertile land. A fire is made on the pile of stones that makes a hearth and the very sight of the crude fire makes fierce talk bubble up about the day that will some day come when they will have electricity, radios and their children will not need to pause on the long toil up the hill from the stream with the heavy water jug. So much tiredness in children, so many thin bodies, yet the little girl in the house where I spend a night hunts for a tiny bit of a broken comb to comb out lovely hair. She takes a morsel of soap from its place behind a splinter on the wall, delicately washes her hands in a tin basin, laughing. "Some day we will have lots of water, lots of soap."

They believe in that *some day* and they believe in their *today* and are proud of their struggle. They should take their place beside the great of the world, they have fought well. Everyone agrees on the necessity of the visa. So it is no surprise that night, very late, with the darkness heavy with the scent of many flowering herbs, to hear footsteps coming along the banana path. Under the banana leaves they are carrying a typewriter and Lino Alvarez their leader is coming with many papers to show me. We go through these papers first, with a tiny oil lamp flickering and the owner of the house sitting upright in a hammock very excited and happy at all the company that has suddenly filled the room. The wife has made a wonderful drink out of oranges yanked hastily from a tree by the children and she has brought out a treasure, a tiny round tin box the size of a silver dollar, with a white powder in it. It turns out to be nothing more extraordinary than soda, a pinch of which makes the drink foam up in a way to delight everyone. Lino Alvarez, with his white clothes and blue shirt and the sword of the Spanish general that he wears since his days as a soldier in the Spanish-American war, wants the entire background of the struggle in Realengo understood. His stubborn integrity makes the trickery of the companies who have tried to defraud these people seem even more shameful. We are going over the papers and it is only toward the finish that the matter of the visa is again brought up. The question has been threshed out long before the trip to this house was made, it seems, because the visa is now ready. Lino Alvarez did not think a visa should be placed in the book but he thought a paper of some kind was fitting. The paper was already in an envelope and as it is laid down the whole scheme of these mountain lives resolves itself more clearly. Not only miles but steep mountains apart, they must have been busy all that day hurrying up and down, consulting, carrying messages, by some secret telegraphy of the mountains transmitting news.

They are very proud as I read the visa. The secretary and one of the vice presidents sign. Lino Alvarez, the president, signs slowly. He is only learning to write now. Little pigs grunt for food and in the excitement of signing, a huge pan of corn that had been painfully shelled that day by the entire family so that on the next day it could be ground up for Realengo bread, a thick corn mush, fell to the floor. All the children scrambled to save it from the assault of the greedy pigs. The mother pig outside with a brood of very thin tiny young, screams for her share. A horse sensing food, whinnies. Doves begin chortling and bristling around one's very legs. The whole room is humming and what kernels are not saved, are scooped up and guzzled by the noisy pigs. Hunger is here, it was here all during the evening meal of ñame and malagña but no one is paying attention to it. Bright eyes are looking at the paper and as I put it in my pocketbook they take seats again gravely.

This is a small hut. The district of Realengo is small in comparison to Cuba and Cuba is only a tiny island but no one in Realengo feels alone in the fight for freedom. They talk too much of what is going on in the world. They know too much to be alone.

I am writing this many weeks later than the visit yet it is impossible not to write of it as if it were in a continuous present. This is Pennsylvania farming land. On May Day the farmers of this community had May Day in Doylestown. A woman told of the effort to evict her family of eight children. It took many hours to get her off the land. They had to pay her a dollar apiece for five pigeons before she would go and the little humble triumph sounded good to every farmer. The meeting on the courthouse lawn closed with singing the *International* and I remembered one Sunday afternoon in Realengo 18 where it rained hard on the palm roof all day and little boys played a game with beans on the earthen floor. The calf stepped inside out of the rain and a parrot screamed on its hoop swung from the roof. After a while it got dark. We had been talking about the problems of Realengo and some of the men had again drawn maps to show the relation of this district to Santiago and Havana where workers had gone on strike in sympathy with Realengo last August. Soon it was too dark to make maps and we began singing, first the *Marseillaise* and then the *International*.

Everyone knows that since that time much blood has been shed in Cuba; the iron military rule has tried to crush strikes, stifle protests. Neither jail nor guns can completely silence such singing.

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How "Left" Is the N.A.A.C.P.?

LOREN MILLER

St. Louis.

FOR the past few years the question of changes both in organizational structure and policy has been agitating members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. So strong had this movement become that the twenty-sixth annual conference held in St. Louis from June 25 to 30 was widely advertised as the turning point in the organization's history. The delegates were presented with and overwhelmingly adopted a program pledging the Association to "foster the building of a labor movement, industrial in character, which will unite all labor, white and black" and calling for the laying of "the intellectual basis for united action between white and black workers." Minor democratic reforms were also adopted.

Demands for a change have centred around two points: that of inner democracy and that of adopting a program to enable the Negro people to cope with the ever mounting problems brought on by the crisis. The fight for democracy came into the open in 1933 when Chicago delegates to the annual conference launched a bitter fight against the "self-perpetuating oligarchy" charged with ruling the Association. The desire for a change in policy has been growing steadily out of the realization that despite twenty-five years of struggle, discrimination against and segregation of Negroes have been on the increase. The victory in the Scottsboro case by the International Labor Defense has also played a part and many members of the Association have come to see the sterility of the organization's purely legal approach to the question of Negro rights. Nor can the shift of the Negro masses to the left be neglected as a factor. "We are losing the masses to the Reds," cried one delegate.

The theory that the Association is dead was not borne out at St. Louis. Its reports show the organization of twenty-three new branches in 1934 and it claims a membership of 85,000 scattered in 404 branches. Those branches contributed more than $20,000 to the national office during the year and the conference attracted delegates from as far west as California, from the deep South and from the East and Middle West. It is still a very vital factor in Negro life and to that extent in the life of the nation.

On the other hand there is no doubt that the influence of the Association has declined in the last decade. The circulation of its magazine, The Crisis, dropped from more than 106,000 in 1920 to less than 20,000 last year. Statistics as to the number of new branches are a little misleading because the Association isn't careful enough to list the number of branches which become inactive and a branch formed under the persuasive oratory of a national official may never meet again. According to its own rules, a membership of 85,000 should have contributed twice as much as $20,000. In reality, income has declined largely during the past few years. Another large but intangible loss keenly felt by the Association has been that of the allegiance of a considerable number of Negro intellectuals. It was the discontent within and the fear of a continued loss of influence that moved the officials to present the new program to the membership. "Members of the Association, and particularly the Board of Directors," have felt the necessity for appraising technique and objectives "especially in relation to the changing scene," according to an official statement. Thus officials have erected the pleasant fiction that they are very "left" and inhibited only by a "backward membership."

Notwithstanding their "backwardness," the delegates endorsed the new program by a preponderant majority. They also corrected an "oversight" in the official resolutions and pledged their support to Angelo Herndon and the Scottsboro boys. In the same mood the delegates laughed off a suggestion that Communism be condemned in the same breath with fascism. The Senators who filibustered against the anti-lynching bill were naively scored in the official resolution as having "done more to destroy faith . . . in orderly processes of government than ten thousand soap-box orators." Delegates struck that out. National officials proposed to condemn "white labor" for discriminations in unions; the delegates changed the phrase and directed it against A. F. of L. officials. Another proposal, advanced by the officials, to criticise the foreign policy of the Soviet Union was refused by the delegates. And despite their brave talk and their professed desire to launch out on a "militant" program, officials used their influence to kill a resolution endorsing the forthcoming National Negro Congress, called for the specific purpose of launching a concrete fight for Negro rights.

As the conference wore on, it became increasingly evident that the Association leaders weren't nearly as militant as the program indicated. They were long on words but very short on concrete proposals for action. For example, at a time when the question of Italian aggression against Abyssinia is agitating every Negro in the country, the officials were content with a long and rambling resolution apparently designed to show off an intimate knowledge of international politics. That ended the matter. If anything is done about the situation it will have to be done without any guidance from the leaders.

What happened at St. Louis can be understood only in the light of the Association's history. It was founded in 1909 to "revive the ideals of the abolitionists" and early formulated a civil-libertarian program concerned almost wholly with dealing with violations of so-called fundamental citizenship rights. Under the guidance of W. E. B. Du Bois, the Association held to the theory that its main fight was to destroy restrictions aimed at what he called "the talented tenth," the small middle-class group to which he belonged.

This narrow program precluded any extended struggle against the growth of monopoly and finance capitalism which was undermining the whole American middle class. Since the crash in 1929 it has become increasingly plain that the old program is almost criminally inadequate. A new program has become imperative. Du Bois admitted that fact last year and in a document which pointed out that discrimination was growing in spite of the Association, he proposed that the organization give up its old constitutional fight and advise Negroes to take "advantage of segregation." It was the old dream of a petty-bourgeois utopia in which an assured clientele would be guaranteed to the professional and business man. Du Bois quit when his program was rejected.

The resignation of Du Bois left Walter White—as secretary—the guiding spirit simply because he was the choice of the Board of Directors, which is all powerful. Under the Association's constitution the Board has all of the power to hire officers and make laws. The members who support it have none. The Board is self-perpetuating and responsible to nobody. The annual conferences have no real power and even the changes made at St. Louis cannot take effect unless the Board changes the constitution to adopt " any or all of them." Included on the Board are a number of fairly well-known Negro professional men and women and such "liberal" whites as Governor Lehman of New York; Senator Arthur Capper of Kansas, on whose papers Negroes work in none but menial capacities; Mary White Ovington; Governor Frank Murphy of the Philippine Islands and Clarence Darrow. The president, J. E. Spingarn, is white, of course. Walter White, who is imbued with great personal ambition, is strictly a jobholder under the domination of Mary Ovington and Spingarn. His real function is to please the Board on one hand and make the Negro membership like it on the other.

White's chief lieutenant to aid in carrying out the new program is Charles Houston, a Washington attorney. Little remains to be said about his opportunistic outlook after Martha Gruening's expose (in The New Masses, Jan. 8, 1935) of his handling of the Crawford case. As educational director he has launched an ambitious unemployment census proposal. Under his plan ministers will take a census of the jobless in their own flocks.

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The unemployed must go to the church and, to quote Houston, "if they do not have enough interest to come to Church, let them look out after themselves." After the census has been taken the plan provides that the ministers shall "present to the officials the needs of the City." In plain words, the Negro masses need take no action; they can resign their whole case to the tender mercies of their religious leaders.

In view of these facts it is a little difficult to believe that the Association will suddenly become a fighting organization. The conference offered further proof. Despite their professed impatience to lead the delegates "left," officials neglected to popularize their new program. They didn't even send it out until after June 10. Each session considered different topics and in none of them was there any forthright attempt of the oh-so-radical officers to present a program for action.

The session on cooperation with other agencies floundered around for the simple reason that officials had neglected to appoint to it any person who would bring forward a real program for cooperation or united front with working-class organizations. The matter of a Labor party was completely forgotten when the section on political attitudes in 1936 met. The section on problems of tenant farmers was vitalized only through the presence of Ward Rogers and a woman sharecropper from Alabama. And had it not been for the speakers none of the delegates would ever have known that there is a Sharecroppers Union in Alabama. This curious hiatus between grandiose theory and the necessity for initiating a practical day-to-day struggle ran all through the conference. Everything is postponed for the working out of the details of a vague program which by its own terms need not be completed for five long years.

Some little insight into this strange reticence on the subject of action was afforded by Spingarn's keynote speech. After mumbling a few words in condemnation of fascism he lashed out into a bitter denunciation of Communism and held the German Jews up as terrible examples to Negroes. The German Jews who became Communists, he said, confused the German people who became convinced that the terms were interchangeable and out of that confusion came the excesses of Hitler. He advised Negroes to shy clear of the Reds. It was very evident that he didn't want to be connected with an organization that might embarrass him. The next day Angelo Herndon told his story to a sympathetic conference.

The temper of the delegates was unmistakable. "We must share common ground with the Negro worker," one of them exclaimed. "When we call a meeting on discrimination we have nobody, but when we call a meeting on bread-and-butter matters, we have a full house," another said in endorsing the new program. "We must go to the masses," was a commonly expressed sentiment. The few diehards who wanted the Association to cling to its old program were heavily outnumbered. The Association has never had a youth section, but a number of young members appeared and virtually demanded that the organization consider their problems.

A number of leaders of middle-class thought spoke out for a united front. Most of them were halting and hesitant, but John P. Davis, secretary of the Joint Committee on National Recovery, made an unabashed plea for the Association to cooperate with working-class groups. A. Phillip Randolph, head of the Pullman Porters' Union, was no less positive in his approach.

How far the members of the Association might go in the direction of the united front or what measures they might adopt nobody can tell because, it must be repeated, they have no real control over the Association. Certainly part of the dissatisfaction with the Association's past must be construed as dissatisfaction with Walter White's leadership. But White stays because the Board wants him and because he is willing to do its bidding. When discontent forced the adoption of a new policy, the bureaucrats on the Board picked Charles Houston to take charge of new activities. The youth who clamored for activity were told firmly that they must remain under the control of the adult branches and they too were given a handpicked leader, a very religious Baltimore girl. And even if the Board adopts every change made at St. Louis, its power remains unchecked. The "democratic" reforms were shallow frauds which simply gave the annual conference the right to select three out of a committee of seven who will *suggest* nominees for the enlarged board of forty-eight persons. The Board will go right on choosing its own members.

As for the new program it isn't as "left" as officials like to pretend. Professor Abram Harris of Howard University, who headed the committee which drew it up, wasn't at the baptismal rites. He resigned last winter after the Board had spent six months debating his proposals and seeking to emasculate them. Evidently, he hasn't much faith in the future of his program in its present hands. Nor did the new program seem to frighten those at whom it is ostensibly directed. President Roosevelt, who never found time to speak out for an anti-lynch bill, sent his warmest greetings and Chambers of Commerce invited next year's sessions. Because of its vagueness, the program is wide open to a thousand interpretations and it is evident that Houston intends to resolve it into a mandate for a new orgy of legalistic performances. He harped on court action and his idea of destroying color bars in unions was aptly summed up when he advised blanket injunctions against unions in certain cases. "We may have to hit the unions on the head to pound some sense into them," he said.

Perhaps the deepening of the crisis will make the members of the Association see that they must sweep aside old obstructionist leadership if they want to play a vital part in the fight against the conditions that breed their own misery. That will plunge them into a bitter contest for a really democratic organization with the power of election of directors and officers lodged in the members. Although the new program does not provide for definite action it does lay the basis on which, to quote its own phrasing, "cooperation with other groups or agencies" may be effected. Its real significance lies in the fact that the middle-class inspired and dominated Association has been forced to give grudging endorsement to the proposition that the Negro question can be solved only through cooperation with the working class. In any event, the Negro people and their friends can't afford to dawdle around and wait in hopes that the present leaders of the Association will do something. The St. Louis conference merely discussed the problems. The National Negro Congress which meets early next year at Washington should get support enough to enable it to translate this fine talk into positive action.

Poem

PENINA CHINITZ

On the wide streets, the houses divided by long, cool lawns,
extent of possession defined by clipped shrubs, repeated by
locked gates,
between the tall trees marshalling the curb,
evening, sensing space, stirs up a breeze.

On narrow streets where houses hug and unite,
the heat-contracted room relieved of the body's plaint
is slow to expand to darkness. Pavements quicker cool.
Walking together against the resistance of fastened air,
waiting together on benches, boxes, steps
until sweat remembers that sun has set,
together, close in the closeness, asbestos strength regained.
The curse that began a moan ends in a fist
and the words link, and move, and hover
over the very young climbing green hills in the gutter's dirt,
and move, and rise
over the tightened clasping, over the huddled walls:

Every evening one day nearer brings
the long lawn's coolness, the tall tree's shade.

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Our National Parks

JULIA O'CONNOR

"THE present National Park service stands as an example of efficient and far-seeing governmental administration—"

All day I thought about these words—and many others—utterances of the President after having for the first time seen a National Park—printed in The Minneapolis Journal, August of last year. I, too, first saw a National Park.

The great yellow coach ran under the portico. Just in front of it another yellow coach. Old Faithful rumbled. A spurt, a warning. Up in the air column after column of boiling, uninterrupted acid water. Like bees, the help from our coach crawled down. Carefully, I, too, found the steps of the coach. Already Mrs. U., manager, going up the hotel steps. "Gosh, she's hard," a bellboy said. By me a little Chinese. To work in the laundry. The only Chinese in this part of Yellowstone Park.

Rangers. Government men. Patrolling. No throwing of cigarette stubs to start fires. Hotels, dudes, animals, fountains, rocks, flowers—everything under governmental protection. . . . No liquor allowed in the Park.

Horses, thin, tired looking. Not even stooping to nibble the short grass. "Get in there, damn you!" The slender lithe cowboy—leather leggings, sombrero hat, red bandanna handkerchief tied about his neck—watching the grooms corralling, swings his long rawhide whip. Dull the eyes of the little Chinese. Hopeless. Pitying. The horses try to run. Been here all winter. Not much food in snow. Tired in the spring.

The acid water had run down the cone, spread out at the foot of Old Faithful. "Form in line for sleeping quarters!" High up in the eyes of Old Faithful. For twenty girls one small bathroom, a hopper, a bowl, a bathtub cut off from the rest of the room by a sheet. In two days the hotel opened, every inch of the immense place scrubbed, put in order. All through the summer for thirty-five dollars the month, through long hot hours, lifting suitcases, running errands, carrying trays, making beds, whatever work ours.

BREAKFAST at five-thirty. In the linen room to meet the housekeeper at six o'clock. At the back of the hotel the mess hall. Face downward on the clean white oilcloth my plate. I reached for the bacon and white bread. From a huge coffee pot, a woman poured my coffee. The maids were leaving. Some men, talking, laughing, stepped over the long bench, filling the maids' places. Hurrying, I gulped. The tang of the cool, rare air, blowing through the open windows had given an appetite. Even the canned milk and oleomargarine weren't so bad. Yet—

Very business-like the housekeeper. Good looking, Mrs. Luck. In her eye each room, its key's number, every article of furniture, the bedding, the linen, the electric bulbs—even the springs that tore too-quickly pulled sheets. Disguised nothing. Going to be hard. On duty at seven—in the linen room getting our supplies. Dinner at eleven. Back on the floor at eleven-thirty to stay there until four o'clock. Rest until five-thirty. Eat. On the floor from six to seven, replacing towels. If in the old part of the house, carrying water, emptying slop jars and waste baskets.

Thirty-five dollars the month pretty good for so little work. A free trip to and from the Park. A free trip through the Park. Only having to contribute to the Hotel Company our labor for the first month. The house cleaning came in that. We were to work in teams. To the swiftest, most efficient workers fell the better floors. The modern annex yielding the heaviest tips. Half the maids were teachers or office help, but the girl teamed with me a professional maid. Strong, well-built, she hurried me through the work. For the first time in my life I found difficulty in keeping up. But Joan pleasant. In my new surroundings, without her I should have been lost. She who taught me the trick of fluffing out pillows, beating them down, squaring them with my elbows. The hotel way of making a bed.

By noon of the third day the dudes in hordes. Coming down the main hall away from the great lobby, entering or passing many of my rooms—twenty—including the nurse's dispensary, which must be kept scrupulously clean. Joan had gone to the modern wing. But I was content. The heaviest section of the old house. My work had been good.

Tonight a walk. Mammoth geyser scheduled to play. These walks, these curiosity-seeking tours well-taken the first two weeks. After that the canned milk, the oleomargarine, the absence of vegetables—but I could keep going. As yet the good bacon—that peculiar flavor—the good meat had not nauseated. Not until the third week. . . . Tea, bread, an egg, the foods that kept me alive the third week. Then—meat, good meat. Gratefully, I ate it. All morning it sustained me, the nice lean strip of bacon. We had passed the mosquito stage and were coming into the heat.

The day of the strip bacon, altogether I emptied and carried seventy-six pails of water. Much of this carried around the L. . . . A pull on the chest, but the guests soiled, dusty. Two well-filled pitchers—a bucket to each, meant two well-filled slop jars. One woman and a man wanting to be clean put out a wash. Strung it about the room. Going, they left a tip—large, yellow. Two lemons.

Such a good day, the day of the return to the strip bacon. By eleven every mattress flipped; every bed stripped, remade. Nineteen baskets emptied; thirty-eight pails of water carried. And the nurse's dispensary. . . . That at supper—unbelievable! Cabbage slaw with canned cream! Delicious! The only vegetable in four weeks. Oh, the good bacon. I ate and ate until the maids stared. "My, God," a bellboy said, and he looked worried, "you had better let up on that." Sweet those bellboys—college boys—trying to see life—drinking a little. . . .

That night I walked down the road and sat on a rock. The second baker had sat opposite me at supper. Such a big, fat torso. Covered by an abbreviated undershirt. The coarse, black hair on his chest, under his arms. The great ugly jowls. Flesh, flesh! That awful stone in my stomach. Tomorrow, Sunday. Full house. The bacon, how could I eat it sitting opposite a pig?

SUNDAY! If we could just have one day off, even every two weeks. But—"The present National Park service stands as an example of efficient and far-seeing governmental administration—" Divine services in the dining-room, but not before four o'clock. On duty between six and seven. Sunday the Hotel Company's biggest day. Day of profit. Did not the President say, "There is nothing so American as our National Parks. . . ." Profit. Profit. Is not that the system? Profit. Helped us, too. Thirty-five dollars the month with board and room. Good board. Good meat, good bacon, canned milk, oleomargarine. No vegetables this summer. But two summers ago. Plenty of them. That flavor—that peculiar taste. An extra. The Hotel Company, does it not have to pay for that? Help to put it in? The sheet in the bathroom separating the one bowl and one hopper from the bathtub—for twenty girls—does it not have to launder that? Laundry costs. Thirty-five dollars the month for laundry help. But not the first month.

"Boy," I said one day at table, making a horrible grimace, "what is that devilish flavor?" Some one laughed. Then—"Water!" Up spoke a would-be Carleton grad.

"Water!" Of course. Warned against it the first week. By the maids. Two or three of them had had to have the nurse. Frightful diarrhea. Holding up the bathroom mornings. One little window. Before breakfast. . . . Awful. Twenty pair of eyes—twenty noses. One's food so laxative. Canned milk, oleomargarine and meat. Good meat.

DEEP crevices in the palms. Deep splits. The red flesh showing. Blood. Eating, eating down. But there is good water in the Park. Fine spring water. For guests, bellboys, management. . . .

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"Water!" Yet why had that nice boy laughed? "Arvid," I asked my roommate, "you have been here a long time, the peculiar taste of the food—what is it?"

"Oh, oh," blushed the big, black, kind, Finnish eyes. Slowly, the sunken mouth shyly smiled. "Alum. Alum. To stop the pep. The 'it.' Well, you know, the boys and girls go out together in the dark."

Thirty-five dollars we were getting. Good board, good room, but not the first month. That month we gave our labor free. The house cleaning came in that. Right. Why not? Thirty-six dollars the round-trip fare from Minneapolis that summer. Contract labor. The Childs' Hotel Company took us out. Free transportation. Free transportation through the Park. Guest accommodations. Three splendid hotels to stop it. Late. Just before the closing of the Park. But free! All free! The Hotel Company—well, almost you would call it that—FREE. Half rates. Pretty good to go through America's National Parks —free—half rates. The meals. Only the meals full price.

No, Sunday we must work. The Big Day. One Sunday nine-hundred guests. Hot. July! For a week the house jammed. The dining-room girls had begun to complain. Their meals swallowed so hurriedly just before serving. Sleeping quarters suffocating. Over the kitchen. Such tiny windows. Keeping white uniforms difficult. For all that help—five tubs. To have uniforms laundered expensive. No tips. The girls were angry. They would leave. One by one falling sick. But the nurse came up; then, the manager. The girls got up.

Selfish ingrates! Dining-room girls! Tips! Tips! Rooms like the Biltmore Hotel rooms they must have. Why, National Park Hotels are run by a company. For profit. The help. . . . Has the President not said—"There is nothing so American as our National Parks."

Profit. Profit. Profit. That's the thing. The Lord's commandments! What do they count? A silly little person, God! An old woman! Some people even think he doesn't exist. Yet, there are people foolish enough to believe this glorious Park was thrown up by God. That he handed it to us, is still handing it to us —Hotel Company, dudes, hotel workers, campers—animals—just as he fashioned it, out of his pitying, loving hand.

The little German woman, wife of the chief cook.

"Ach, ach! So much trouble. My husband it makes it hard. In the pantry two more girls going."

"Fourteen hours! Mrs. U! Fourteen hours! Daily in a hot pantry. Sick, though my sister, you have forced her to come down. Inhuman! Our passes, Mrs. U—"

But the manager has fled. Why, the manager was drunk, the help said, last night.

Alice, the teacher, too. Extra service. Always, nearly every morning. Reporting did no good. Never compensation. Then, yesterday, in the night something happened to the hopper—somebody must have stuffed it. The bathroom floor covered with water—yellow, awful—an inch deep. The plumbers had come. Alice to clean up, but Alice refused. In seven weeks Alice had lost fifteen pounds. Her smart blue suit so tight, now hung on her like a sack. Mrs. Luck had Alice discharged.

Alice an excellent maid—only one criticism on her work. A cobweb hanging from a log of the ceiling reported by the chief clerk. Alice, was she not entitled to her wages until the Park closed? Alice had not quit. Also that free ride—half rates—through the Park.

See the superintendent? Yes, certainly. His office at the Springs. The particular ranger Alice had consulted very interested—would meet Alice. . . . But . . . The superintendent away. Very conveniently, for a week. "Sorry, very sorry," the ranger said.

THESE passes—these contracts. So skillfully worded—only the bold, the intellectuals not hopelessly caught.

"No, no, kind lady. Please. Me no lie. Seek. So seek."

Morning after morning the thin little Chinese stood in the office—"Laundry he hot. Lady, be so kind. Me no more can stan'. Please. My pass."

These passes, these contracts, so skillfully worded. . . .

Thinner and thinner, the thin little Chinese. Climbing painfully up the mess hall steps. The thin cotton of his Chinese pants wrapping about his thin legs. Canned milk and oleomargarine. His eyes so hollow—so dull. Work, work!

Then — men — women — heavy, the little Chinese, the thin little Chinese—fallen on the mess hall steps. Heavy like lead. Good canned milk, good oleomargarine, good meat—but only the little Chinese can mutter—"Kind lady, seek—my pass."

Contract labor! Had not the Childs' Hotel Company taken us out? Thirty-five dollars the month. Board and room. Good board. Canned milk, oleomargarine—plenty of meat —good meat—good bacon. Not this summer vegetables, but two summers ago. Plenty of them. That flavor—that peculiar taste. And the water! Such good water to drink. Thirty-five dollars good wages. Too good. The first month you work for nothing. House cleaning comes in that. Good board. Good room. In the eaves. Free transportation to and through the Park. When the guests have mostly gone. The food! Full price you pay for that. Profit. Is not that the system? Profit. Profit.

Franklin K. Lane, discussing the purpose of the Parks, during the Wilson administration, of three ultimatums, made this appealing statement: "They are set apart for the use, observation, health and pleasure of the people."

It was after the Wilson administration that the writer was in Yellowstone Park.

"The present National Park service stands as an example of efficient and far-seeing governmental administration—"

All day I thought about them—these words —these words and many others—utterances of the President. . . .

"There is nothing so American as our National Parks—in brief, that the country belongs to the people; that what it is in the process of making is for the enrichment of the lives of all of us."

Greetings to John D.

The girl from the Golden West telegraphs (collect) to John D. Rockefeller on his ninety-sixth birthday, July 8, 1935.

TODAY you are getting messages from far and near—from Poland to Chili, from Montana to Java—all coming from superintendents and managers (the "little pushes" greeting the "big push"). Of course you haven't heard of most of your bosses, but they work for you—and how. Buried in the piles of records in your office you will see (if you ever go there) books showing that you own smelters here, railroads there, factories elsewhere, etc.—some employ only a hundred men, others thousands. Why, out here in the West is Butte—you have never seen the place, yet you own it, body and soul. (You would be interested in seeing this camp with its ore dumps and shindigs. Do come out to see us sometime, won't you?) You own the two newspapers of Butte—one Democratic and the other Republican. You own newspapers elsewhere in Montana—Democratic and Republican; you control the legislature—Democratic or Republican. You own one-fifth of the state's wealth; yet your silvery smile (big as a dime) has never beamed upon us. Most of the workers of Butte are on your payroll. Strange, isn't it, to employ so many men you've never seen—and don't even know you employ. Why, my father worked for you, too. He got killed—dropped to the sump in a cage with four others. Of course you never heard of that. It really isn't a very nice thing to describe, those five men buried in one coffin—one funeral, one preacher, one sermon—all very simple. Maybe you think I'm mad or envious or jealous. Oh, no—not at all. I hope you live many years yet—even to a hundred and ninety-six, for I think you will see great changes. Your wealth is like a tape worm. It got its start in a diseased body. It adds to itself with little effort and grows ponderous. Sooner or later it will starve the body in which it lives—and so kill itself.

Yours truly,

Lillie, The Girl from the Golden West,
Butte, Mont.

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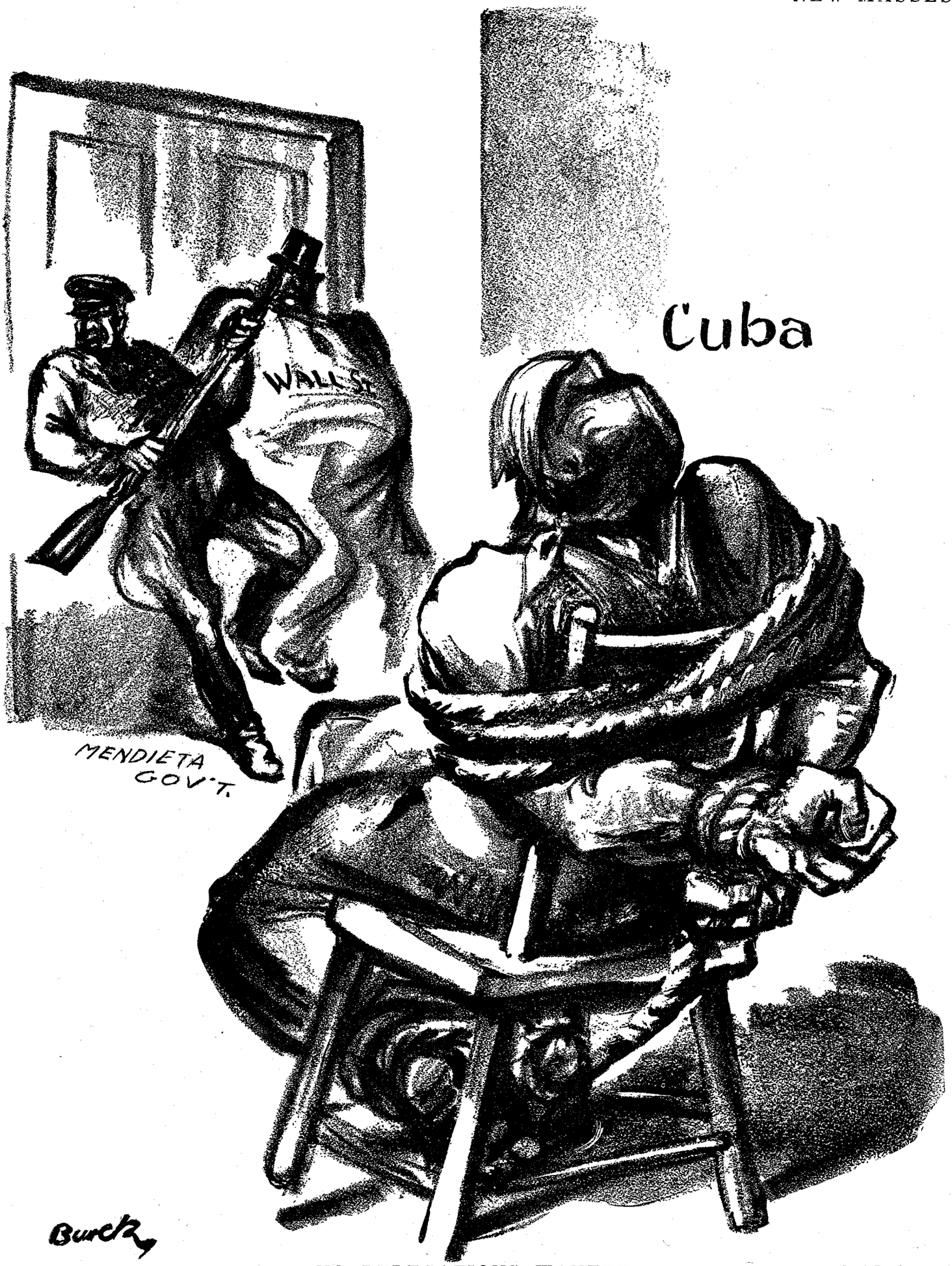

NO DELEGATIONS WANTED

Jacob Burck

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Love in Two Worlds

ELLA WINTER

MR. STANLEY RICHARDSON of the Associated Press and other American journalists in Russia had a good time recently. There was a swell story for them to send to their papers, with a God-made humor seldom vouchsafed to correspondents. Pravda, Communist Party official organ, published an article "ordaining love as the foundation of the Soviet social structure" and warning young Communists they "must be capable of this noble feeling" under pain of public persecution. The A.P. quoted some paragraphs from the article and then commented:

> This pronouncement, following a series of official measures designed to strengthen home influences, was taken to demonstrate that the former Communist theory that the family is of diminishing importance has been abandoned.

Four years ago I was coming down in the elevator of an office building on Madison Avenue when a dark-haired young man was introduced to me. He was obviously excited.

"I've just got orders from my office to go to Russia!" he said. "And I don't know anything about it. Can you suggest some books for me to read?" It was Stanley Richardson of the A.P., and he was twenty-six.

He's been in there four years now, has married an American girl, and he wanted to be a good correspondent and understand the Soviet philosophy. But evidently it is almost impossible for a person brought up under capitalism and Western culture to grasp the simple Soviet conception of life. The very name dialectics frightens them. So Stanley Richardson wires the press of America: "The former Communist theory has been abandoned."

Now, it hasn't been abandoned at all. The Soviet Union never tried to make human beings who would be mechanical robots turning out machinery and "spawning" (to use Time's pleasant, if a little undignified, word) children to work those machines. The Soviet idea was to make life pleasanter and happier and more worthwhile living for everybody. And Communist leaders and philosophers, looking about them, didn't have to look very far to see that capitalist exploitation carried on in field and factory and workshop was carried on in the social institutions of family and home also. The private profit philosophy was fundamental in human relationships, even in what should have been love relationships. No American can fail to see that today. Read any newspaper—but particularly the Hearst papers, which make such a fetish of "Americanism"—and see the headlines: "Balm suit, Alienation of Affections suit, Alimony suit, the society scandals as to who shall 'inherit' a four-million-dollar child; the divorce suits, the adoption suit." All using a strong, instinctive human emotion, "a noble feeling" as Pravda has it, to make money out of. California must have topped the sensation market recently when a wife accused a man of alienating her husband's affections, but you didn't have to get further than the second paragraph to find it wasn't her husband's affections she was mourning for so much as a trust fund that had somehow become unpleasantly involved.

And Hollywood! Hollywood, where there is most easy money, and where "morals" clauses are inserted into movie contracts; emotions there are a definite marketable commodity. The price of an evening's entertainment may be $20,000 hush money next morning. Blackmail has been raised to a business; it isn't even a racket any longer.

But these are only the excrescences of the "noble emotion" in bourgeois society, it may be objected. No, they are not; they are symptoms; they are the unhealthy effects of an unhealthy condition. Love, marriage, motherhood, the home and the family, all in a bourgeois society become bourgeois and suffer from the same canker, the same rotting disease as other bourgeois institutions. The gap between these sick institutions and the healthy relationships that are trying to break through, is filled by hypocrisy.

And it is perhaps the hypocrisy that is most nauseating to most people. At any rate, it has formed the basis of the majority of novels and plays dealing with home and family and rebellion of the young in the past decade or two.

The basic changes wrought in Russia which altered the character of the bourgeois family were the granting in fact of equality to women in every sphere and in every regard, the taking over by the State of functions of the home which enslaved the woman without contributing to family happiness or cohesion (such as cooking, washing, looking after children during the daytime) and the freeing of marriage and divorce. With these went a tremendous propaganda for women to take part in public life, supported by educaton, training facilities, material encouragement and a ceaseless admonition on the part of the Komsomol organizations and papers to the young men to change the age-long attitude of men toward women. Especially in the East and in old Russia women had been regarded as chattels of men; in Siberia they were actually their veiled slaves.

The Soviets never try to change psychology by merely preaching about the necessity of such change. They don't say "Don't spend all your time in the home"; they build nursery schools and communal kitchens and creches and public laundries so that no woman need spend all her time in the home. They give the women equal wages for equal work and a wife the right to get a free divorce if she wants one and to "alimenta"—payments by a father for the upkeep of the child till its eighteenth year. A wife does not have to be kept by a divorced husband unless she cannot work for any reason; the law says only for a period of six months need the husband keep the wife, *or the wife the husband,* if for any reason she has a job and he hasn't. (Legislation in this field is constantly changing and some of these legislative details may already be changed.)

Now at first these changes were very difficult for Soviet citizens, just as difficult as any change in deep-rooted habit is for anyone. Men kicked and rebelled, even murdering their wives who threw off the veil in Central Asia; parents threw up their hands in horror at what they thought was irreligious licentiousness on the part of their children who did not get married in church. Peasants particularly found it hard to assimilate the new ideas. Soviet stories are full of the humorous situations, the resentful complaints or wry stoicism of men, and women, too, unused to this new freedom. There were touching stories, too, of women stealing out of the fields to snatch their babies back from the wicker cots in the farm creche: unable to believe that the trained children's nurse could look after little Marusia or Olga as well as they themselves could (even though their mothers' care led to a high rate of infant mortality). But bit by bit example taught them; they saw their children grow strong, healthy, happy, useful and enthusiastic. They saw that the new marriage and divorce laws freed many thousands from intolerable unhappiness; they saw that women taking part in public life, when they got over their first superiority, could still be devoted and loving wives and mothers. And above all, economic conditions also were having their effect. From the chaos and bitterness and instability of the first years of the Revolution and War Communism, through the greater security of the NEP years with their return of some bourgeois characteristics, to the stern and uncompromising regulation of national life under the First Five-Year-Plan, men and women passed with increasing responsiveness to their opportunities for self-expression. As life became more secure and there were provisions for families and encouragement to have children (though abortions were free or very inexpensive, women were encouraged to bear their children unless conditions were very adverse) the family became a stable and needed institution again. But not the bourgeois family! Its props and its property, its *raison d'être,* the material foundations which supported it were gone; now it was the socialist family. The name was the same; the institution as different as a false pearl from a real one.

The two Soviet satirists, Ilf and Petroff, writing in Pravda, say that many Soviet women are asking for abortions now because they

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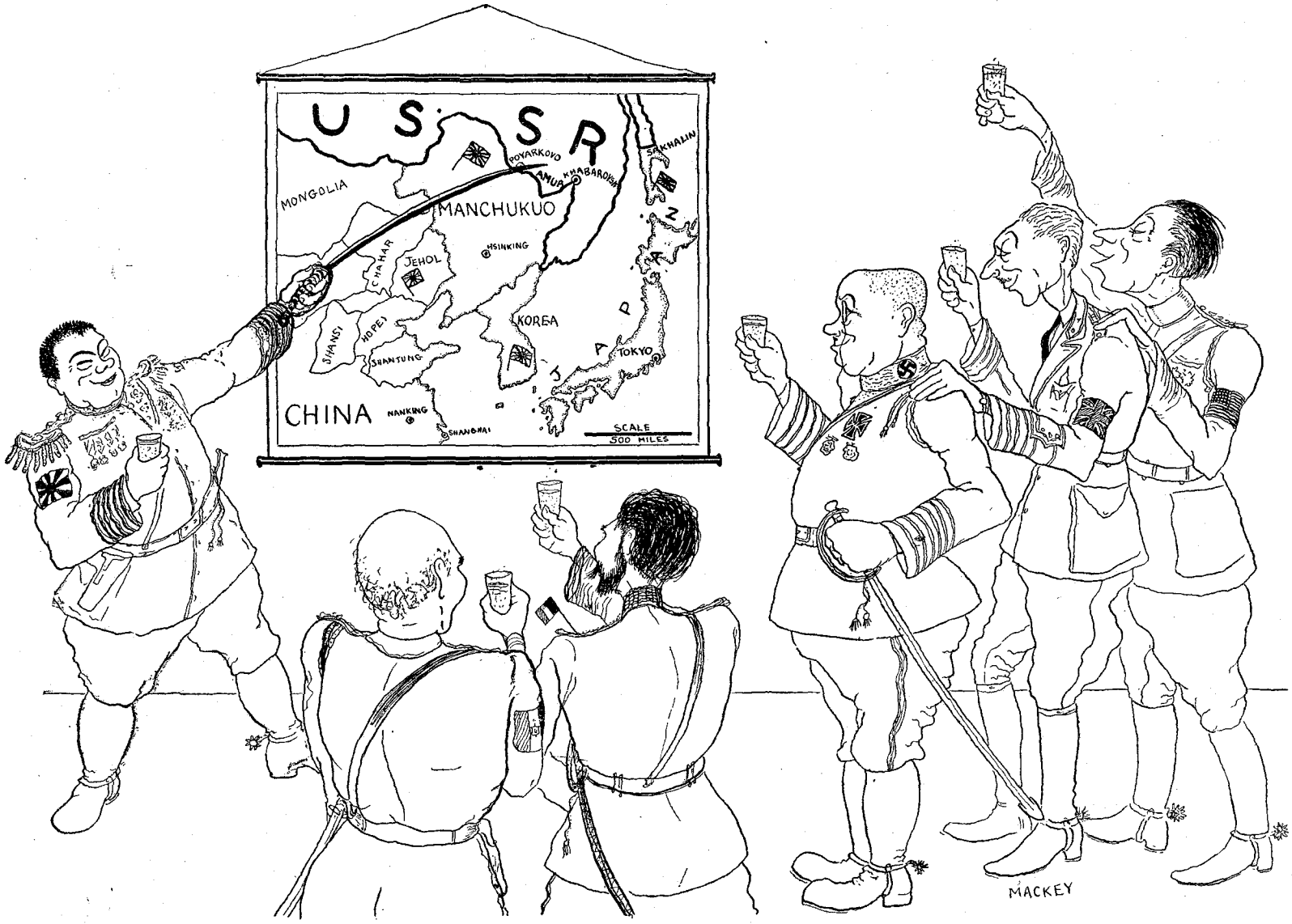
are not sure their husband will not come home from summer vacation with his third wife. For this reason also the price put upon a Soviet divorce is now 500 rubles. Well, this will without doubt scare off those simple-minded peasants and others who actually didn't take marriage more seriously than a ten-kopeck tramway ride and it may curb the gay Lotharios and those who do not yet sufficiently appreciate the tremendous things that must be achieved before the new world is strong enough to hold its own in a hostile universe and against all possible aggression and enemies without and within. Still the rules cannot be relaxed, still it is not time for Soviet Russia to enter that classless era when the State will have withered away and all men can live as they wish without curb or rein from without.

But the best of the intelligent and understanding workers in the Soviet Union take their marriages and families as seriously as they take their work; their wives are mates, friends, co-workers, mothers not only of their children but of the coming little socialists who will also still have to make the mainspring of their lives the penetrating of socialist ideas into every field. What Americans do not grasp is the fact that to these Soviet citizens this is not a dull government ukase but a living and thrilling individual desire, as great a moving force to many citizens as the prime moving force and incentive in America—the desire to amass wealth—is supposed to be.

The Soviet authorities want mothers to bear children. "We care for these mothers because they give us our little socialists," said Arnold Soltz. Population is desperately needed to exploit and develop the vast riches of this sixth of the earth's surface whose potentialities are only beginning to be realized by geologists, mineralogists, agriculturists, Michurins, animal breeders and so on. There will always be jobs in the Soviet Union, so that there is no fear of unemployment. And while everyone is engaged in productive work—and all work is productive because all wealth can be distributed and does not have to lie unused in banks as frozen assets, in caves specially built to hold the gold, in killed patents, nor in wheat burned and cotton plowed under—all work will add to the wealth of the country. It is unthinkable in Russia that some men should be engaged sowing weeds to give other men the job of pulling them up—the classic description of much S.E.R.A. work!

Much has been made in the American press of the similarity between the Soviet desire for increased population and the incentives offered by Mussolini and Hitler for large families. Especially when the Russians themselves have admitted they want population also to defend the Soviet fatherland. But the difference is fundamental. Fascist countries want war to preserve the capitalist system which breeds and maintains unequal distribution; fascism maintains violent inequalities of distribution and all the misery, starvation and barbarous cultural attitudes that go with this by violence; such countries need man-power to maintain this violence in and out of the country. Output and productivity are limited and are more and more restricted, and the standard of living goes down. Art, literature, science, knowledge, culture, invention are discouraged; only the manufacture of munitions and war materials is pushed. Soviet Russia also must manufacture war materials, because she is certain she will be attacked; she must have man-power when this war comes, because she is fighting not only her own battle, but the battle for all the workers of all the world. But at the same time, her output is increasing, her productivity is increasing, jobs multiply, and as every scientist and artist and technical man who has visited the Soviet Union will testify, there is a flowering of science, art, children's theaters and museums and exhibitions and clinics and schools, music and all other sides of culture as never in any country before. Every institution is undermanned, every factory is understocked, the population could absorb ten times the magazines and



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newspapers and books if there were the paper to print them on and the distributing apparatus. If, when fascist countries have the added population they are striving for, there were no war (though this remark is undialectic), these countries would be in a wretched pass indeed; the surplus population, unable to live, would be a horrible and insoluble problem. The press of population alone will call for war, as it is forcing Japan today, with her incredibly low standard of living, to absorb more and more of China. No, the Soviet Union wants population to build up her country and so socialist conceptions the world over; fascist countries want population to defend with their blood a dying order.

The differences between the new Russian socialist family and our "bourgeois" family are best expressed by the virtues extolled on the women's pages of our daily papers. The arrow-collar husband coming home to his neat little frigidaire wife while Junior plays on the floor in lux-washed woollens . . . and wifey holds up her face to be kissed while shining-eyed she shows him a new dish she has just cooked. This little woman is not looked on in Russia as either attractive or useful, as either a good companion or desirable partner. She might be a little pitied, like the backward races who have not yet learned the glories of twentieth century science. The Communist young husband today likes to boast of his wife's achievements, the fact that she is a good comrade. That she is pretty, has nice clothes, can cook well, is gay and witty and a "good mixer" may delight him personally, but they are not the qualities he would consider socially most important. Women in public life in America, especially in reactionary organizations, are frequently unattractive or else are thought of as unattractive (remember Grant Wood's painting of the three D.A.R.s?). The ideal woman in the Soviet Union today is wife, mother and worker.

Communist society does not pretend to solve all problems of the human race. There will be "domestic" tragedies in a Soviet society as in other societies; love between a man and woman will die, jealousy, envy, hatred take its place; a man will love a woman who does not love him and vice versa. No Communist philosopher ever predicted that a Soviet society would be a domestic utopia. But the problems, even if tragic, will be problems worthy of human beings, not the heart-balm and alienation suits worthy of savages. And meanwhile Communist society has set out to, and these recent developments prove have to a great extent already achieved, the elimination of those "domestic" problems and attitudes which were the result of economic conditions and the forms developed by those conditions. They have come down to love. The ties and forms of home and family can be strengthened now on this new basis. It doesn't matter how firm a hold the socialist home and family have. The period when men and women, boys and girls were urged to attend their clubs, go out to their communal groups rather than sit at home with a family, is evidently over. They have their clubs and can go if they wish. But there is no longer the social fear that if they stay at home, papa will dominate and try and force his son to take over the father's firm, that a socially desirable though loveless marriage will be forced on a daughter. There is no danger that a marriage will be forbidden by parents because of differences of race, religion, nationality, or economic means. Children are freed from the domination and exploitation of parents as wives are freed from the domination or exploitation of husbands. And, too, now that all members of the family are coming to be educated and to be independent and intelligent Soviet citizens, social intercourse in the home can be just as pleasant and stimulating as social intercourse outside it. It isn't a duty any more. Hypocrisy is out. One of the ingredients of a successful marriage and happy home-life has always been, even according to American sob-sisters, "community of interest"; what has happened in Soviet Russia on a large scale is that community of interest, the same ideals and hopes, inspire members of a family and so give them respect for one another and a possibility of growth and development within their four walls. The affection members of a family naturally feel for one another has no longer the stifling effect it all too frequently has in bourgeois society; it has been freed from its chains and now mutual help, respect, sympathy and love can flower. And the new Soviet law is: "Let 'em flower!"

So if Stanley Richardson had really understood the new Russia he would have wired for the Associated Press to the press of America:

> This pronouncement, following a series of official measures designed to strengthen home influences, was taken to demonstrate that the Communist theory that the family in capitalist society is a bourgeois institution subjected to all the influences of bourgeois decay, was correct, and that having now established the socialist family they have no more fear of it or its corrupting influence.

But perhaps only the revolutionary press would have published such a dispatch!

The Crisis in Italy

BRUCE MINTON

MUSSOLINI has had over twelve years in which to prove that the political and economic theories of fascism can be successful. Today, Italy is on the brink of war. The standard of living is lower than that of any other European country. Intense misery, with the prospect of starvation at home or military service in the hot desert wastes of Ethiopia is the only future that the average Italian subject can anticipate under what Mussolini is fond of terming "the regime of the Blackshirts."

It is extremely difficult to gain exact knowledge of conditions within Italy. One of the most effective censorships in the world sees to that. True, statistics prove that food prices have risen since 1929 by 300 percent while wages have dropped at least 60 percent. Figures show that the other aspects of Italy's economy are fully as startling. But because American finance has loaned the Mussolini government the funds to carry on his "great experiment," the American press has published less about true conditions in Italy than the press of any other country. And because no problem of national minorities called for such spectacular brutality as that with which Nazi Germany shocked the world (though ten years before Hitler's rise, Mussolini had turned Italy into one vast prison) Italian fascism has escaped much of the publicity that Germany has received. The result is a lack of understanding in this country of conditions in Italy during the last five years of capitalist crisis. Tourists bring back reports of trains running on time and of fewer beggars crowding the streets. Fascism has done *something,* they insist; it cannot be wholly bad. Nor did they hear anti-government talk, they tell us—forgetting that aside from the barrier of language, it is hardly circumspect to complain in Italy.

But news leaks through. Fugitives from fascist terror arrive in this country or smuggle out letters. From them we learn that fascism has brought only suffering without hope of improvement. Fascism with the profit system as its underlying base, has reached the stage where to assure profit it must look to imperialist expansion as the solution.

It would be well to consider a few figures. Even before 1929, Italy had not participated in the so-called benefits of industrial expansion which had ruled for half a decade in most capitalist countries. Fascism had been marked by a steady decline: the number of bankruptcies which stood at 1,868 in 1922 when Mussolini seized power, had risen to 9,954 in 1933. Pig-iron production in 1932 was 142,000 tons less than it had been in 1913. Tonnage of goods passing through Italian ports showed a decline in 1932 as compared to 1913, though the population had

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increased by some six millions. Nor did Italy go through the phase of "high wages" which capitalist economists of other lands fallaciously thought would do away with crisis once and for all. Between 1927 and 1929, wages in Italy fell 20 percent while wages were on the upgrade or at least stationary in other imperialist countries. The Corporative State showed increases only in red ink on the ledger. And it was at this time, when the first major wage-cut was instituted that Mussolini told the Senate: "Fortunately the Italian people is not yet accustomed to eat several times a day. Its standard of living is so low that it feels scarcity and suffering less."

Taking 1929 as 100—and remembering that 1929 was a serious low point in comparison to the standards prevalent in other capitalist countries—we find that the index of industrial production reached its most depressed point in 1932 with an index of 66.86. Since then there has been an increase, for the most part the result of feverish war preparations, so that last year the index reached 80. Employment rose in 1934 to 83.07 from a low of 78.50. (Italian figures on unemployment, like those supplied by our own government, are subject to a great deal of juggling and are never exact.) Imports fell to 32.3, exports to 34.3. The entire Italian economy is harassed by continual difficulties, aggravated by obstacles that menace the development of production: difficulties accounted for by restrictions on the export of finished products and restrictions on internal trade. Moreover, new investments of fixed capital are practically non-existent. Foreign trade has suffered heavy losses. Only the few monopoly industries, strongholds of finance capital, show any significant amelioration. Their improvement is based on government orders for war materials to be used in Africa and are at the expense of other industries which suffer a corresponding slump. To complete the picture, the fall of gold reserves, which recently assumed grave proportions, has threatened the stability of the lira.

WHAT does this mean to workers and peasants? How does the sick condition of Italian industry and finance affect their daily lives?

Naturally, in industry, wages suffer first in times of crisis. Mr. Paul Einzig, whom John Strachey quotes as a warm friend of Italian fascism, wrote, "In no country is it so easy as in Italy to obtain the consent of employes to a reduction in wages." These reductions have amounted to approximately 60 percent in the last seven years. An agreement between employers and men resulted in a cut of some 20 percent between 1927 and December, 1928. A year later, there followed another 10-percent decrease and in 1930 a further drop of 18 percent. At the close of last year, Mussolini again forced the scale down, by approximately 16 percent.

How does the worker live under such conditions? In Northern Italy (higher scale than in the south) the average worker receives, when employed, 14 lire a day (about $1.15). But prices are out of all proportion. If he wants a pair of shoes, he must pay 40 to 50 lire at least. A suit of clothes sells for 250 to 300 lire. Bread, the fundamental item in his diet, costs him 1.50 lire a kilo; spaghetti, 2.50 lire a kilo.

Not only are his wages of 14 lire insufficient to provide necessities for his family, but the worker does not receive all the 14 lire. Before he leaves the factory with his pay envelope, he has to dip into it for countless levies. For example, if he belongs to the Fascist Union, he must pay dues of 20 lire a year. Even if he is not a member, he must contribute half this amount to the support of the union. Then he is forced to buy unemployment insurance to the tune of 2.50 lire a week; and winter relief which runs from 1 to 1.50 lire a week according to the amount of his wage. In addition to these taxes, he is compelled to contribute to the following funds: post-war benefits; old-age insurance; tuberculosis insurance; sickness insurance; contributions to the "war loan"; and miscellaneous demands which a hard-pressed government is always shunting on to the workers.

The government's unemployment statistics acknowledge a million idle men. This estimate is grossly inaccurate. Nearer to the truth would be twice that figure. The government has paid out from 1923 to 1932 300,000,000 lire in insurance money; in this same period, the government admits collecting 1,400,000,000 lire. The difference went into "overhead" (300,000,000—as much as the unemployed received) and into war preparations.

With huge unemployment, with those out of work soon exhausting their insurance benefits, a large proportion of the population faces actual starvation. In the cities, relief is provided—to the few lucky enough to possess a poverty book. Of course, men who lack the proper spirit of fascist "cooperation," men with relatives still working or with a family on a farm to which they can return, or who have been suspected of not supporting the fascist regime of slow starvation with unrelaxed enthusiasm, do not receive poverty books. A few manage to get hold of them and they can get relief—but only in the winter; in summer they must fall back on their wits. And with a poverty book, a family is entitled to soup once or twice a day—that is all. No clothes, no rent.

The situation is desperate. A letter tells us that women bring their children to police stations. "You feed them," they say. "Otherwise, we will kill them. There is no other way."

While the industrial worker is in the greatest need, the farm laborer and small peasant are without any relief whatever. Italy is primarily an agricultural country: the great majority of the population live on the land. Prices of farm products have dropped precipitously (despite the high prices such products command in the market place). Unemployment insurance does not stretch to the agricultural worker. His condition is that of the most abject serf—worse in many respects, for in feudal days the overlord had an economic interest in seeng that his subjects did not die too rapidly of starvation. Now, the farm laborer earns approximately ten lire a day when he works in grain: such jobs do not exceed a period of ten days a year. For three months more, he can hope to find work in the vineyards or potato patches, for which he receives 4.50 to 5 lire a day. The remainder of the year, he is without employment.

The poor and small farmers raise crops and pay taxes. No peasant can tell how much or how many taxes he pays in a year. Ask one and he will run into his house and return with a fistful of receipts and tell you to count them up yourself. When he sells his products in town, he pays a levy. He is taxed on his pig, his cow, his horse, chickens, farm equipment, house, land and water. He pays special taxes on the wine he produces and the grain he raises. One percent on his total income goes into the fund for war preparation.

WITH the crisis, which hit Italy harder than any other imperialist country (Italy's economy is weaker than that of her imperialist rivals) increasing numbers of the poor farmers lost their land to banks and corporations. The peasants have been steadily dispossessed. Tens of thousands have lost their only means of livelihood—their land. No place remains for them; their labor power is not needed to cultivate the soil. They retreat to the hills, or live in caves or cellars, eking out an existence far worse than an animal's—by stealing, raiding warehouses, gleaning the fields, living off of friends or relatives who still have something to share. Many villages can point to as many as 30 percent of the peasants under police regulation—which means without visible means of support.

The program of fascism must harness a steadily increasing burden on the backs of the great majority of the population. All protests, all opposition to the increasing pressure from above must be ruthlessly abolished. As far back as 1926, Mussolini suppressed all political parties that dared resist the ruling clique. Socialists, anarchists, social-democrats, syndicalists, Communists—their parties and organizations—were declared illegal. Even before this time, while technically "legal," opposition functioned for the most part secretly. But the "Corporative State" must have some sort of mass base—one of the underlying contradictions—and therefore, while trade unions were abolished in the same manner as political parties, the Mussolini government found it necessary to set up the Fascist Union. This proved to be a company union on the grand scale. Membership was optional—but a man who did not belong would have difficulty finding work. Consequently, the large proportion of workers signed up.

Last year, Mussolini decreed the 40-hour

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week—to spread employment. Wages did not go up to compensate for loss of work-time and as a result the 40-hour week was a bitter blow to the workers, who found their earnings cut still lower. With the passage of this legislation, many fascists in the Union—up to that time good party members—tore up their membership cards in disgust. They knew very well what to expect: their fears were soon confirmed. Employers used the decrease in working hours not to spread work but to speed up their employes to the point where the production formerly accomplished in the longer work-day was turned out in the shorter. To illustrate, while industrial production in December, 1934, as compared to December, 1932, increased 14.79 percent, employment rose only 9.55 percent. At the same time, the hours of work in industry went up but 1.39 percent, insufficient to compensate for the rise in production. Thus, each worker turned out more goods at an increased rate, adding to the profit of the employer while seriously reducing the earning capacity of the individual worker.

Since 1931, the Fascist Union has become an increasingly fertile field for Communist Party activity. In every locality, members are beginning to understand the Communist position, to draw closer to the one Party which basis its program wholly on their fundamental interests. What is true in the industrial centers, is also true in the villages. In many of these small towns, out of one hundred fascists as many as seventy-five belong to the Young Communist League.

THE LEAVEN of militant leadership accounts for the recent defiance to the government. From 1927 to 1931, most mass movements were spontaneous, growing out of immediate grievances and lacking coordination. But now, more and more, such protests are carefully planned and carried out with the maximum effectiveness. To be sure, the work is difficult—Communists or militant leaders close to the Party are sought out at all times. The Union is riddled with informers and government spies. Intimidation, cruelty of all sorts directed against the workers, retard activity. But each month the leadership of the Party gains more followers, each month sees an increase in Party prestige and in the militancy of the working class.

A few examples have interest. Last December, a contingent of seventy workers five miles outside of Foggia, were engaged in repairing a railroad line. They had not received their wages for forty days, though their contract called for 11.50 lire a day plus 5 lire for working away from home. Instead, they had been getting 10 lire and this had been withheld for over five weeks. They struck, threw down their tools and marched in an orderly column into Foggia: by the time they had reached the superintendent's office their force had been augmented by five hundred sympathizers and had been confronted with companies of police, militia and soldiers. The superintendent attempted to disperse the strikers by smoothing things over, promising concessions in the future if they would return to work. "There are no strikes in Italy," he said. "If you continue in this action, you'll go to jail." The spokesman of the workers answered, "Of course. This is no strike. Only a protest. Pay us our wages!" By the end of the day, they had been paid a bonus. Two days later, they received all back pay.

On two other nearby railroad lines, the workers learned of this victory. With the example of their fellows, fifty workers from each line struck and forced the government to pay wages up to then withheld.

How, in the face of terror and rigid governmental control, could workers force these concessions? Why weren't they shot down? Because, despite Mussolini's brave speeches, he fears the mounting mass resentment. Resistance might be the match to light the fuse of open rebellion.

Strikes and demonstrations have been held by the hundreds all over Italy in the last year. Middle-class shopkeepers, who have been forced out of business and proletarianized, rally with the workers. The peasants too are restive. The class line is sharply drawn, not only in the cities but among the farm laborers—and becomes increasingly a part of the peasant's consciousness. As yet, the peasants are confused—they fight local officials but support the government at Rome. At Protola Peigna just a year ago, the peasants angered by the *Podesta* (corresponding to our mayor but appointed, not elected, to office), ousted him, fought the police, burned the town hall, cut the telegraph wires and set up their own government which resisted the militia for several days.

And now, to add still another burden to the desperate plight of the masses, Mussolini prepares for war in Africa. War against Ethiopia, a new territory to exploit, a territory long coveted by Italian imperialism. The last resource of fascism must be war. Mussolini has apparently decided that there is only one way out.

Mussolini is finding that there is an end to how far a populace can be exploited. The limit has been reached in Italy today. Profits can no longer be extracted from a nation impoverished by years of the fiercest drive against both the workers and farmers. Only war can give a breathing space—perhaps.

But the masses—who must fight the war—do not want to join the army. Ethiopia is far away; already shiploads of soldiers sick with malaria have returned to Italy with tales of conditions in the army camps. Letters from sons and fathers stationed in Italian Somaliland tell of the scarcity of water, how each man is allowed one litre a day for drinking and one litre for washing and how any further ration must be bought out of low wages. The food is bad. There are no proper housing facilities for the troops.

The reaction against this imperialist adventure is not slow to express itself. Soldiers daily desert and slip over the Austrian border. In Naples, recruits dove into the harbor from transports. Many have taken the 500-lira bounty offered as an inducement for service overseas and then have run away.

THE drive for war accelerates. With it, mass resistance grows. The workers become increasingly eager for strong leadership. The Communist Party has given them the slogan, "Disrupt the military forces," and this directive is taking hold and gaining popular support. The government shows its concern by censoring news even more strictly, by ordering the reporter of The Chicago Tribune out of the country and banning even a paper so sympathetic to Italian fascism as The New York Times. Throughout the nation, demonstrations held under government auspices to fan the war spirit become less and less successful and are often openly defied. A "jubilee" in Gran Sasso, which included five villages, proved a complete fiasco. At Bari and Tarento, two large industrial cities, aerial maneuvers over the city were stopped when tens of thousands of workers jammed the streets demanding bread, work, cessation of war preparations. Caltanisetta, in Sicily, was the scene of a general strike of the populace and soldiers at the time of the mobilization of the class of 1911. Messina, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Turin, Trieste—throughout all Italy the war has met with protests, refusals of men to go to war, mass demonstrations when troops entrain. In Naples, five hundred "volunteers" left the barracks. In Pistoia, fascist militia beat their officers. These instances could be multiplied many times.

War is not popular. The government is not popular. Starvation, disease, despair have become the norm in Italy. The following conversation, reported by a worker who escaped the fascist authorities, gives perhaps a better picture of the state of mind among the peasants than long descriptions. This worker, walking along a road in Southern Italy, met a peasant. The worker asked, "Do you think that war will really come?"

"Yes," the peasant replied. "It will come."

"And you? What are your feelings? Are you for or against war?"

"It depends. If it's war with France, then I'm against it. But if it's war with Russia, then I'm for it."

"Why? Why are you for war with Russia?"

"Because Russia will win."

"Oh! But supposing Russia should lose?"

"That can't happen. Before we would let it happen, we would go into the Red Army." He stopped, then added, "We all feel that way—all my friends. Everyone where I work talks that way."

Mussolini plans a war with Ethiopia, a war of conquest for new territory. The peasants, promised land in Africa, remember those who settled in the hot, vast deserts of Liberia and on the dry Aegean Islands; most have long since returned to their native villages, worn out, defeated by terrible poverty.

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Correspondence

"Conversion Endings"

To The New Masses:

Alan Calmer's introduction to the splendid short stories contained in the quarterly issue of The New Masses is, in general, on a par with the stories.

I think, however, that in one respect the article partakes of a confusion which affects much of the work of revolutionary writers. In speaking of the "conversion ending" Calmer says that "such stories do not convince the sincere middle-class writer who reads them that the revolutionary movement has a positive effect upon the artist but rather a negative one. . . . Enemy critics are quick to pounce upon such writings and hold them up as representative samples of proletarian literature."

While all this may be, and in fact is true, it should not be a leading question to the writer of proletarian short stories. Do our writers write for the benefit of "the middle-class writer?" Unfortunately, many do. And these sentences will not help them conquer that weakness. Of course what critics say is important but, at the expense of being called a "leftist," I should say that our young writers cannot allow the bourgeois critic to set standards for him.

Proletarian short stories, whether or not the majority of their readers today are of the proletariat, are written for the proletariat. It is not the primary task of a writer of such stories to bring around "the middle-class writer" although if his stories are good, he will do so. Alfred H. Hirsch.

See Current Contents Box

To The New Masses:

I have had a number of discussions lately with Communists about the new deal Communism proposes to give women. So far as I can see it is equivalent, roughly, to the liberation the Negroes were given after the Civil War. When I say so far as I can see, I simply mean here and now, in this country, and insofar as the Party is able to function and demonstrate its nature, and insofar as I am able to see what it does. I am speaking of actual deeds and real results, not of the abstract policy which is beautiful enough. As an outsider looking in and seeing only through the window, I catch glimpses like this:

1. The current (July 2) New Masses is written 100 percent by men. (If there is a woman writer in the issue or on the staff, her name is disguised so that the fact is not too evident, an even worse shame.)

2. The executive positions in the Party are held by men. Of course, as an outsider, I can only estimate vaguely, but I see a predominance of women in the ranks and a man in every position of any consequence.

When I mention these facts to Communists they react in one of three ways. They point with pride to some lone woman who holds a third-rate post, much as Mr. Roosevelt might point to Ruth Owen or Miss Perkins to prove that women get a square deal in America. Or they sneer, and say with fine sophistication, "What! still a suffragette?" to which one might well reply, "Yes, and still an abolitionist, also." The third reply is verbose, and, now that I have heard it so often, rather tiresome; it is a lengthy recitation of the whole attitude of Communism toward women, plus a retreat to Moscow for concrete examples.

Without having access to your files, I would say that the impression one gets is that your recognition of women is even more grudging than that given by capitalism. To match the current New Masses, take Scribner's, in which there are four women contributors—there may be others with names disguised—but four frankly so named. And is there an article written by a woman in the current Communist? If so, she is a ghost writer.

I believe the question should be put this way: Do you feel that women are lacking in ability, or do you admit that you have failed to recognize their ability?

New York City. Ann Weedon.

"Answerable to Nobody"

To The New Masses:

The Regents of the Municipal University of Omaha, including the president of the Chamber of Commerce and head of the Livestock National Bank, and the president of the Nebraska Power Company, voted Thursday to dismiss Dr. W. E. Sealock as head of the Municipal University of Omaha.

No reason was given. But last month, at the request of the student body, President Sealock had started an investigation into a spy system, where students had been sent to note and report radical utterances on the part of the professors or students. At a student mass meeting of protest, he had said that he would force action on the results of the investigation in spite of any possible consequences to himself.

When the students threatened a protest strike, the regents consented to a hearing on the evidence of the investigation. The hearing was secret, and the student members of the committee of investigation bound to silence with threats of dismissal. The regents declared the evidence inconclusive.

At the time of the reappointment of professors, Sealock's appointment was withheld. Members of the faculty, including Dr. Edgar Holt, dean of the college of arts and science, and Dr. Claude Stimson, head of the department of economics, threatened to resign. One of the members of the board of regents resigned in protest.

The regents waited until the summer vacation. With regular students and many of the faculty, including Dr. Sealock, away, a dissenting member of the board absent, and the vacancy left by Martin unfilled, they voted the dismissal of Dr. Sealock six to one. The dissenting member, William Ramsey, resigned from the board because he could no longer buck the "dominating majority." Senators Burke and Norris sent telegrams of disapproval of the board's action. The faculty signed a petition urging Sealock's retention. Last night the students held a mass meeting to which they invited the public.

The Board of Regents have not moved from their position. The Board of Education, which appoints the regents, gave an indication of its attitude when it yesterday filled one of the vacancies among the regents by appointing Hird Stryker, attorney, (who has acted for the "non-strikers") on the board of seniority arbitration of the local street-car strike, which flared into national prominence this month on the murder of two workers by police shooting into a crowd of demonstrators. Stryker's withdrawal from the arbitration negotiations has given the company grounds for rejecting the award.

Three members of the board of regents, when asked to whom they are responsible for their actions with regard to the university, said, "We are answerable to nobody." One of the members of the board, Dr. Shearer, said to the students preparing a mass meeting on the spy system, "I will have the meeting broken up. I have had meetings broken up before."

A militant audience, including students, parents, faculty members and teachers from other schools, at last night's mass meeting, made clear their determination to fight the issue of academic freedom. A citizen's committee was formed to act with the students. Another mass meeting is to be called the coming Friday night.

Protests against the spy system and the dismissal of President Sealock should be sent to the Board of Regents, Municipal University of Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska, J. E. Davidson, Chairman; and to the Board of Education, City Hall, Omaha, Nebraska.

Malvina Reynolds.

Omaha, Neb.
June 29, 1935

[As a result of his discharge and attendant circumstances, President Sealock committed suicide this week.—The Editors.]

Letters in Brief

In response to an appeal in this column several weeks ago for donations to help release two militant workers from Southern chain gangs, the following sums have been received, and turned over to the proper quarter: Eleanor Flexner, New York, $4. From a Group in Philadelphia, $5; Anna Johnson, Chicago, $1; Elizabeth Lancaster, Manhasset, L. I., $10; Irene Nichols, $1; Marian E. Herrick, Warsaw, Ind., $2. Total, $24.

L. Knobel writes that he has been "unable to recover from the shock I received after reading Tom Kromer's review of *Hungry Men* by Edward Anderson. Not so long ago I read Tom's book *Waiting for Nothing* in which he reached the conclusions: if bums are hungry they ain't got enough guts to start a revolution, and if they are not hungry they have no need of a revolution. I was disgusted with this glib analysis. . . . Now Tom seems to have seen the light. How come?"

The Workers' Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street, New York, has published a nine-page "Guide to Readings in Communism," for use in conjunction with Earl Browder's "What Is Communism?" published in The New Masses. Mail order requests should be accompanied by five cents for postage.

Isidor Schneider's recent review of E. E. Cummings' book of poems *No Thanks* has raised conflicting opinions. Karl Long of Berkeley, California writes "for a group of young poets, students, writers, and Y.C.L. members" and contends that Schneider should not "dignify E. E. Cummings with a pretentious review. . . . " On othe other hand, Joseph Kling of New York City holds that Schneider's belief "that only class-conscious poetry can be good poetry" stultifies his critical sense. He adds that Schneider overlooks Cummings' "superbly revolutionary poems such as 'I Sing of Olaf' . . . for the purpose of making Cummings appear to be a fascist."

A Roof-Garden Dance at the Heckscher Foundation, 1 East 104th Street, New York, for the benefit of the American Mercury strikers will be held on Saturday, July 20. Many authors and editors have promised to attend. The dance is given by the Office Workers' Union.

The Office Workers' Union writes that I. Peters, of The Negro Liberator, and others, served as a committee to test a charge of discrimination against Negroes at Parkway Baths, Brighton Beach. They were refused admission on the grounds of "no room." Police dispersed the committee. A mass demonstration of thousands of white workers protested this Jim-Crowism. Police arrested fifteen pickets. At the police station, Peters and another Negro worker were put in separate cells away from the others who had been arrested and who happened to be white. Total bail was set at the excessive figure of $12,000.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Proletarian Mystery

THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE, by B. Traven. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50

AS *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* follows *The Death Ship,* it begins to look as if the man who calls himself B. Traven was the finest story-teller of our times. Both of the novels prove that realism and irony and understanding are not incompatible with action and excitement.

The Treasure of the Sierra Madre begins with Dobbs, jobless and penniless in a Mexican town. After various adventures, Dobbs meets Curtin, who is also down and out. Together they meet an old prospector named Howard. The three start out together to hunt for gold. They find it, but not in fabulous nuggets. To extract it, they work: "Convicts in a chain-gang in Florida would have gone on hunger-strike, and not have minded the whippings either, had they had to work as these three men were doing to fill their pockets." After months of such labor, they collect some $50,000 worth of dust. On their way back Howard resuscitates an Indian boy and as a result has to stay as a guest of the boy's father. As the others proceed, Dobbs shoots Curtin. He is subsequently killed by bandits, who are killed by soldiers. Most of the gold is lost. Curtin recovers and is found by Howard, who has become the revered medicine man of the village. When they find a small amount of the dust, the partners consider many possible investments, but finally decide that they will be happier if they remain with the Indians.

It is as simple as that. This simplicity, this ability to tell a straightforward story, is one of the two important factors in the great success that Traven has had among the workers of Europe. The other factor is his complete class-consciousness. He is class-conscious not in his thinking alone, but in all his taste, in every single reaction of his body. He cannot touch a subject from flop houses to lotteries, from mining to murder, without illuminating the nature of the capitalist system. He does this not by generalizing but by being absolutely concrete. He presents phenomena in terms of exploitation and profit because experience has taught him that only in such terms can they be understood.

So natural is this way of looking at life that the whole exciting story might, though Traven very possibly has never read Marx, be regarded as a commentary on a sentence in *Capital.* Marx, it will be remembered, emphatically states that gold is no exception to the labor theory of value. At first glance this seems preposterous, for immediately we think of the sudden discovery of nuggets worth thousands of dollars and mines worth millions, and therefore we cannot believe that the value of gold is "determined by the labor time needed for its production." Traven knows better. He knows just how much work that is unrewarded goes into prospecting and how much heartbreaking toil actual mining requires. "Perhaps you know now," Howard says to Dobbs and Curtin, "why one ounce of gold costs more than a ton of cast iron. Everything in this world has its true price. Nothing is ever given away."

Because this is the way Traven's mind works, it makes no difference that there is little in the book about organized labor and nothing at all about revolution. The novel is so thoroughly revolutionary in all the implications that slogans are unnecessary. And certainly they would be out of place. Traven takes his characters as he finds them, and he finds that the degree of their class-consciousness precisely reflects their economic circumstances. When they are down and out, they think as proletarians, but "with every ounce more of gold possessed by them they left the proletarian class and neared that of property holders. . . . The world no longer looked to them as it had a few weeks ago. They had become members of the minority of mankind."

It is because of his insight that Traven can afford to tell so straightforward a story. The art of story-telling has declined in bourgeois literature because simple events are no longer significant. The old-fashioned success story is as ridiculous as the old-fashioned love story. Even tragedy, as Dr. Krutch has pointed out, loses meaning in a world without values. Only the subtle sensibilities of a Joyce or a Proust can hold the bourgeois sophisticates and give them the illusion that something important is left in life. But Traven can write an adventure story that is as unpretentious and as absorbing as any that ever beguiled uncritical boyhood and is at the same time honest, revealing and significant.

It ought to be unnecessary to add that Traven cannot accomplish this feat merely by virtue of being a worker and paralleling Marx. He is a writer and an impressively skillful one. Even as a writer, however, he is unmistakably a proletarian. His figures of speech come from working-class experience. His dialogue is not good reporting but natural self-expression: it is less often verifiably accurate than say, James Farrell's, but it is always consistent, always faithful to character. His sustained irony reminds one of workers' tales and Wobbly ballads. The very movement of the narrative reflects, in some way that baffles description, the life of the transient worker.

It is a good thing for American proletarian literature and for the American proletariat that Traven's works are being made available. The publishers are to be congratulated on following *The Death Ship* with *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* and announcing *The Carreta Government.* But it is a pity that the books cannot be sold at prices workers can afford to pay. They could not find more exciting reading nor a better means of understanding themselves and the society in which they live.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Graves Without Glory

PATHS OF GLORY, by Humphrey Cobb. The Viking Press. $2.50.

THE World War is eighteen years in the past; the next world war is somewhere in the near future. We have achieved a certain perspective in time and good books are still being written about that war, valuable to us mainly as they tell us something about the coming war.

The waste and futility of that war make up the subject matter of the best of such books. *All Quiet on the Western Front, Sergeant Grischa, Through the Wheat, Under Fire*—to list a few with no attempt to make the list inclusive or exclusive. We can add to that list a new book, *Paths of Glory.*

It is well written. With a restraint that leans over backward, Cobb has given a solid, devastating, clear-cut picture of one little episode in that war. It is brutal and honest and compelling. Cobb spares no horror, but he does not gloat over horror; he does not return to it again and again and rub the reader's nose in it. He states the ugliness, the waste, the bestial cruelty and injustice of war and when he has stated it he gives the reader credit for enough sense to get the point without restatement. Cobb is a good craftsman; he knows how to write. But his objectivity and his restraint are at the same time his strength as a writer and the weak spot of his book.

It is a good book and worth reading, but it needs analysis both for what it is and for what it is not.

It is not a complete picture. It deals with an episode daily. Now, it is quite possible to put all of life, all of war, into one episode, so that the whole is pictured in miniature in the part. And it might be an injustice to say that Cobb does not see the whole picture of greedy imperialism linked to the mass brutality of war. But that striving for complete objectivity seems to pull this tale of three doomed soldiers away from its background of world war, of the world civilization

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of which war, injustice, brutality were the fine flavor.

Within its field the book is beautifully planned, beautifully written. We get a neat, completely rounded episode; beginning, development, end. It is, briefly, the story of one abortive attack on the French front in 1915.

Assolant, General of Division, was given the order to capture a German stronghold. It had been optimistically reported captured in the preceding day's *communiqué*. Assolant, known to be vain, capable, and a cold-blooded butcher, had his chance for the Legion of Honor and promotion if he took the position. He dragged his exhausted troops out of their rest camp and threw them back into the line.

Three soldiers, unknown to each other, leave a track through the book. Didier, the good soldier, brave, competent, unemotional—Férol, the criminal, degenerate; good army material because his killing now had social approval — Langlois, the sensitive, essentially good and kindly citizen, thrust into the army and rather stupidly making the best of it. Three men picked at random to die. Because when the attack failed, General Assolant coldly ordered a man from each company to be shot for cowardice. And so these three died.

Well, there it is; one little incident in a big war. And what of it? Aren't we still just a little sentimental about that war, you and I and Humphrey Cobb? Haven't we simplified this too much, this problem of killing and being killed? Ten million men died in that war. In the early pages of this book we see, as a routine thing, that forty-nine men were killed while the new regiment relieved the old in the trench. Didier, out on patrol with his friend Lejeune and their drunken lieutenant, saw Lejeune killed by a bomb thrown in a moment of panic by the lieutenant himself.

Well, so many dead already; half the regiment were butchered in the half-hour the unsuccessful attack lasted. And then, back of the lines, when it was all over three more men died. They died for the cold-blooded murderous vanity of a general, that's true. But what killed the other men? What difference did it make? Ask Lejeune, headless out in the wire; ask Didier, shot by his own firing squad. Who's better off, Lejeune or Didier?

It's too easy that way. We're dodging the problem, with a handy villain in the piece. General Assolant is a complete monster; without his evil force in the background, there would be no story, no release for emotion. Just an assault that failed and men who died in that assault. Nothing new about that. But now can we put the blame on one man, an evil, hard man with hair in his nostrils, a general who is less a man than a personification of the cruelty and bestiality of war.

> The general walked along the road enjoying the cool and fragrant morning. Now and then a whiff of a less fragrant smell would filter through the bristles of his nostrils, and he enjoyed that too, in a way. Casualties were a part of war. Where there were no casualties, there was no fighting. It would be unthinkable not to have fighting under a fighting commander. The smell of the dead reassured him on this point.

A thorough brute, this Assolant. Something sub-human, evil and death personified. That such men actually existed and fitted beautifully into army life, is unquestionable. Remember our own Lieutenant "Hard-Boiled" Smith, whose tortures of American prisoners in the Military Police bull-pens won him some notoriety and a position of honor and responsibility under the State of Pennsylvania after the war. Study the psychology of any general from Cato to Grant, figuring calmly and unemotionally so many dead men in exchange for this or that position on a map —"it's a game, like chess!"

War releases the brutality in man, that's true. More, it pays big rewards to brutality; it honors cruelty and murderous hardness. But there are men of the Assolant type sitting today in the directors' rooms of banks, in the offices of mills. They can close a mine or a factory and starve children to death; when the workers strike they can call on the militia and stage little "example" killings in exactly the same spirit and manner as Assolant on a French field. War and the wider opportunities it gives such men is not a separate thing but only a development of the game they are playing with us and our lives for pawns.

It is a disquieting picture of war that Cobb draws. It is a good thing for us to read now, this generation that may expect war next year or the next, that is already beginning to forget the last war. There is nothing pretty, romantic, alluring in the picture.

But it isn't enough to appeal to justice. There are stronger, more immediately vital forces in the world. Langlois, writing his last letter in the death cell, seems to have had no thought of revolt—only a despairing personal sense of injustice. The recruit Duval, in the firing squad, never dared think of turning his gun away from his friend's chest, turning his gun the other way. But at such a time men do turn instinctively to their comrades in the ranks; solidarity grows spontaneously. Later in that war more than one regiment came out in bald mutiny when it had been pushed past human endurance.

Justice, abiding by the old rules, isn't enough. Are we to cashier all the cold brutes of the Assolant type from our armies (with the consent of the Assolants in banks and parliaments back of the lines)—put good humane fair-dealing generals in command of the troops—make sure that when a man dies it will only be properly facing the enemy? Then we can have a nice, fair, orderly war—won't that be lovely?

No. We have to go all the way. We have to show war as a part of the trading squabble pushed on by greedy exploiting men, carried on, once it has reached the point of armed instead of commercial conflict, by cruel men and none other, because cruel men are good soldiers. We have to see imperialist war for what it is, so that we will know, we workers and potential soldiers of the next war, what to do when we have rifles in our hands again.

DALE CURRAN.

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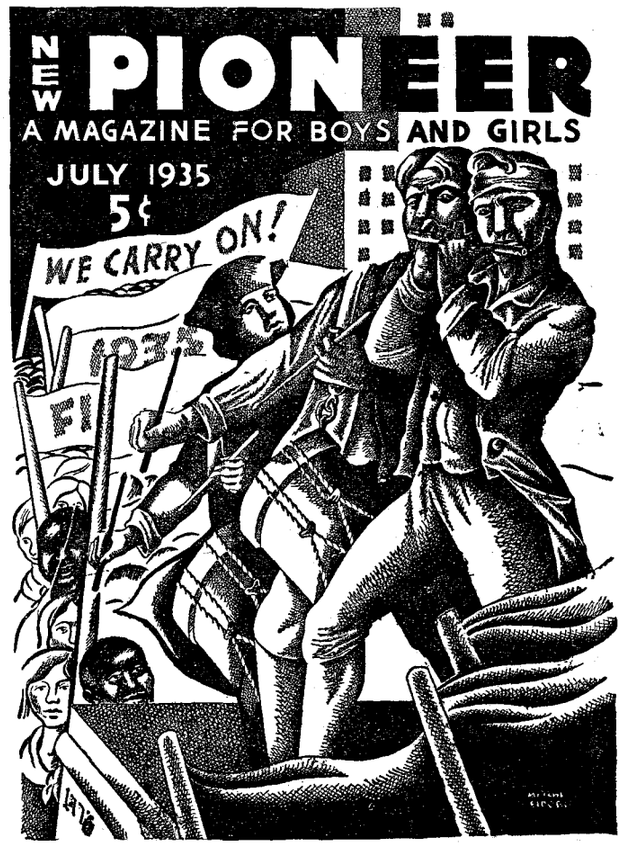

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Apologists for Capitalism

LABOR, INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT, by Matthew Woll. D. Appleton-Century Co. $2.

LABOR'S FIGHT FOR POWER, by George F. Sokolsky. Doubleday, Doran & Co. $2.

"WOULD that mine enemy would write a book," runs the old saying. So an enemy of labor, Matthew Woll, third vice-president of the A.F. of L., head of the Union Labor Life Insurance Company, and acting president of the anti-labor National Civic Federation, has written a book.

The book has that pink "progressive" tinge with which A.F. of L. leaders rouge themselves when they appear in public. It contains fewer jingoistic, anti-Communist slanders of the kind that feature Woll's statements in the Hearst press or in his recent Liberty series. But it is precisely these latter utterances which characterize the Woll type of labor leadership, and the book will not be understood except in relation to the *actions* of Woll and his colleagues.

In the first place, Woll denies the existence of the class struggle. He says, with a sneer: "American labor affirms the mutuality —not identity—of interest of all concerned in the processes of production."

To further this "mutuality" of labor and capital, he favors the organization of employers' groups along with the organization of labor. "There is need for interplay by all groups," he asserts, and devotes a whole chapter in praise of "labor-management cooperation." As an example of the "potency of the cooperative idea when properly applied," Woll cites the situation in railroads, describing the workings of such cooperation in the 1932 Chicago conference of railroad union executives which "among other things, provided for the deduction of 10 percent from the wages of the employes. . . ."

In the same way, Woll reports the United Textile Workers as having "made a contribution in this connection" with its Pequot Plan at the Naumkeag Steam Cotton Co. in Salem, Mass. The plan broke down, according to Woll, because of "unwillingness to accept the cooperative program in its entirety and all its implications, both on the part of management and on the part of employes." In the January 29, 1935 issue of THE NEW MASSES, readers will find the real explanation of the Pequot Plan's failure described by Robert W. Dunn. When the workers, fed up with U.T.W. "cooperation" which meant only speed-up for them, struck, President McMahon of the union, declared their strike "illegal." The workers answered by seceding from the U.T.W. and forming an independent local. Green attempted to sell similar A.F. of L. "union cooperation" to textile employers in the South (in 1929-30) and to the automobile barons (after the 1926 A.F. of L. convention). This they offered to workers in place of an organization drive.

A whole chapter is devoted to the question of higher wages for labor. How does this latter square with the A.F. of L. leaders' truce agreement with President Hoover in 1931, upon which followed one of the greatest wage-slashing campaigns in history? Or with their acceptance of the 10 percent wage cut on the railroads? Concretely, how has Matthew Woll aided the workers' daily struggles for higher wages, on the picket line?

It is clear that organization strikes are labor's chief weapons in the struggles for better conditions and for a better world. Mr. Woll devotes one chapter to the right to organize and another to the right to strike. But to him these are rights to be had on paper. What good is the right to organize and to strike if the workers cannot exercise them?

For example, Woll says that "The general strike as a political instrument in the United States is both impracticable and impossible. In the final analysis a general strike for political purposes is a strike against the State and the State, as such, has the right to protect itself against all forms of attack, including attack by the strike." Thus Woll justifies the terror against the working class in general strikes.

Woll speaks of the "uncompromising democracy of our movement" in the face of the dictatorships exercised by John L. Lewis in the United Mine Workers, Major George Berry in the Printing Pressmen's Union, Weber in the Musicians' Union, a host of lesser lights. He himself, as chairman of the powerful Resolutions Committee at the annual A.F. of L. conventions, takes a hand in killing the resolutions of rank and file unionists on unemployment insurance, on racketeering, on the N.R.A. and the jobs A.F. of L. leaders occupy in it. In *Labor Fact Book II,* the Labor Research Association gave the facts concerning racketeering and dictatorship in at least seven A. F. of L. unions. Still Matthew Woll burbles about "democracy" in the A.F. of L.

On industrial unionism Woll reports: "The Federation favors the industrial principles of labor organization, either in pure form—as its largest union, the United Mine Workers—or in the form of craft federations, as in the building and printing trades." This will undoubtedly come as news to the organized A.F. of L. rubber, automobile and aluminum workers who have fought the A.F. of L. leaders on just this score. In the auto industry, where the workers partially gained their point, the national council of the union is responsible to the top leadership of the A.F. of L. In this manner, Green, Woll and the rest still keep their hands on the control. The whole history of the A.F. of L. belies the statement that "it has shown itself ready to accept the changes made advisable by the development of mass production." In order to assure the fat incomes of the officers of the various craft unions and to assure continued collection of the "per capita," they have opposed every step towards industrial unionism.

It is in his chapter on international labor movements that Woll discards the mask of progressivism entirely. He repeats the Trotsky slanders that the Communist International is "an instrument of Russian national policy," he falsifies the Soviet trade unions, likening them to those operating under fascism, but Woll studiously avoids mention of the economic and cultural benefits of the Soviet masses.

There are two important indications of possible change in policy by the A.F. of L. leadership, a broad hint of A.F. of L. reaffiliation to a "reorganized" International Federation of Trade Unions, the Socialist controlled trade-union center, or with a "World Federation of Trade Unions."

He hints at possible independent political action in alliance with a "progressive" party that Woll sees arising out of a line-up of Roosevelt Democrats and progressive Republicans. This is thrown in as an indication of the so-called "flexibility" of the A.F. of L. leadership, a point which Woll takes great pains to make. But in earlier chapters Woll affirms the "success" of the non-partisan policy which has tied the workers to the two old capitalist parties and kept them from independent working-class political action.

Woll reaffirms his belief in capitalism. "The responsibility of averting revolutions in the past rested upon kings and governments. This responsibility has now largely been shifted to industry." If a workers' revolution (which Woll calls "destruction of our democratic institutions") is to be "avoided in the United States, the task must be faced by those who now exercise the greatest power: our czars of finance and emperors of industry."

George E. Sokolsky, "Far East expert" of The New York Times, is, like Woll, also opposed to revolution. He attributes the crisis largely to the fact that "the total cost of labor raises prices beyond the purchasing power of the whole people and thus prevents the market for goods from becoming active. . . . After 1921 . . . wages should have come down . . . wages remained high."

This myth of "high wages" of American workers prior to 1929 has not yet been destroyed for Mr. Sokolsky. Let me quote Mr. Robert R. Doane: "In the year 1929, the greatest year of prosperity of all time, more than 40 percent of the population were then living either at, or below, the bare subsistence level." And by 1933, total payrolls of wage earners declined over 45 percent from even the 1929 level! Yet Sokolsky can say of the crisis: "The solution undoubtedly lies in an adjustable wage scale on the basis of the bonus system which labor decries." The "bonus system," of course, is the workers' old enemy, speed-up. It is the tactic of paying labor a few pennies more for producing above a certain norm, which norm is continually raised. Since 1929, most enterprises

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have "operated on a non-profit-making basis," according to Sokolsky, and therefore workers cannot now win higher wages because "actually there are no profits."

Mr. Sokolsky sees the N.R.A. as paving the way for fascism and that "There can be no question, under the capitalist system, of producing goods merely because there is a social need for them. Capitalism does not operate on that yardstick; its yardstick is profit." But he can also say: "The fallacy of N.I.R.A. is that it attempts to introduce Communistic measures in a capitalistic structure."

Our author is on even more dangerous ground in his discussion of company unions. In automobile and steel, he says, the "evidence points rather to the fact that the workers favor the company union." It was not the workers, but Roosevelt who recognized the company union in March, 1934, in the notorious "settlement" of the threatened strike. As for steel, the owners have repeatedly refused to permit elections to determine workers' representatives despite all their claims to the alleged thousands who back their rubber stamps "employe representation" plans! When Sokolsky says of General Electric Co., that under the "Swope plan labor has an important voice in policy," he is either a liar or a fool. Margaret Meyer, who made a detailed study of the origin and functions of the General Electric Works Council, found that its "scope . . . has never been enlarged beyond the consideration of questions of a general nature." (See the Journal of Electrical Workers and Operators, March, April, 1929). On the basis of having swallowed the employers' company union propaganda, Sokolsky eliminates the American Federation of Labor unions as a factor and concludes that "the struggle of the future will be between the two types of vertical [i.e. industrial] union—the company union and the Communist union."

He answers in the negative his own question "Will revolution come?" "The American worker," he finds, "remains an individualist because he aspires to become a capitalist." Both Sokolsky and Woll shy away from a discussion of the material and cultural benefits which the Soviet Union has brought workers for the first time in history.

Lest there be any doubt as to which side of the fence he takes in the struggle of the workers against capitalism, Sokolsky writes: "It is the necessity for never stopping that makes organized labor such a sinister force in the community, if the community desires to remain capitalistic and democratic. For, should all the possible demands of labor be granted, then profits must disappear, and Communism is inevitable." To which, Amen.

HY KRAVIF.

Two Studies of Sex

MEN AND WOMEN, by Magnus Herschfeld. Putnam. $4.
SEX AND TEMPERAMENT, by Margaret Mead. Morrow. $3.

THIS book is an account of a 500-day journey through the Near and Far East by a famous student of sexual behavior. The author organized the Institute of Sexology of Berlin (since destroyed by the Nazis), helped found the World League of Sex Reform and is now its president. His observations of sexual customs in the Orient are written with fluency, charm and directness, contain much ripe scholarship and are suffused throughout with a deep sympathy for the oppressed colonial peoples of the East.

It is impossible to summarize the wealth of fascinating detail assembled by the author. The great diversity in morals and habits, man's remarkable ability to express the same few fundamental urges in an almost infinite number of patterns is well brought out. The position of women in relation to man is of particular interest. Almost everywhere throughout the East woman is doubly oppressed, an oppressed sex among oppressed people. In Japan she is the servant of her father until her marriage, the servant of her husband during marriage and the servant of her eldest son when a widow. In Egypt she is her husband's slave and must go veiled among strangers. In India she is segregated, veiled and must stay indoors much of the day in a stifling room. As a result, in Calcutta, the mortality among women is 40 percent greater than among men. However, where the revolutionary ferment is strong, and no part of Asia is free from it, these barriers are being broken down.

Birth control is practically unknown. The only means of limiting the family are abortion and infanticide. Because of the inferior status of women, the latter is practised almost exclusively on female infants.

Prostitution is widespread and in many places a highly organized industry, reaching its apogee in Japan. In Osaki the author is greeted by a deputation of gentlemen in high hats, white kid gloves and dark formal suits—the delegates of the brothel-owners' association. The girls must stay in their miserable profession for years till they have worked off their purchase price.

Child marriage in India, against which all revolutionary workers are fighting, is shown to have been greatly exaggerated by that apologist for British imperialism, Katherine Mayo, who states in *Mother India* that the average Hindu woman bears her first child between nine and fourteen. Although child marriage exists, the average age of first confinement of Hindu women is around nineteen and 85 percent of first mothers are over seventeen.

Too great an emphasis is put on the bypaths and deviations of sexuality—on those things that make one say "How very strange" with a result that the main current, sex as a part of the total life and its intimate relation to the structure of society is obscured and often drops out of sight. There is not sufficient differentiation between sex behavior in the different classes and sometimes this leads to statistical absurdities such as the statement that in China only 30 percent of the men have one wife, 50 percent have two and 5 percent have from three to eighty.

Everywhere the author's heart flows out to the unjustly oppressed. He sees the incredible exploitation of the colonial people. He feels a deep pity for the enslaved and tortured masses; he believes firmly in independence for India. He realizes that the British colonial office preserves the tension between the Mohammedans and Hindus, between the Arabs and the Jews for their own imperialist purposes. He desires an end of exploitation, of ignorance, of the degradation of women and he ponders possible solutions of these problems, particularly as they exist in the Orient. Yet here he shows a remarkable political naivete. He advises the Japanese to practise birth control, to give freedom to women and not to have an exaggerated sense of patriotism. He urges men to be brothers and to belong to a United States of the World. Yet nowhere does he point out how these problems are being solved in Soviet Asia. There, too, women were segregated and veiled, the masses exploited and kept in ignorance and thought strangled by religion. There these things are being rapidly solved.

In the meantime the Nazis have closed his Bureau for Matrimonial Advice, have burned his books and have destroyed his Institute of Sexology. The sexual reforms he dilated upon to Asiatic students have been blown away like all the "advances" of bourgeois science and "social legislation" under declining capitalism. Until the bewildered savant learns Marxist science his own learning will be as helpless as a ship without steering gear.

Another scientific work of fundamental importance is Margaret Mead's book *Sex and Temperament*. It deals with the sexual behavior of small groups of primitive peoples whose native culture remains for the moment unchanged though the jaws of capitalist imperialism are closing upon them. These people, isolated from the main stream of human history, form a natural anthropological laboratory. They are of particular value in furnishing data to determine which of man's characteristics are of biological origin and which derive from the social structure.

Miss Mead studied three groups in New Guinea: the Arapech, the Mundugumors and the Tchambuli. Her motive was to trace down supposed basic sex differences. Are the traits labelled masculine or feminine "natural"? Is the person who departs from the personality designated as appropriate for his sex abnormal? Mead's results indicate strongly that such divisions are social in origin.

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Among the Arapech she found that there were no psychological characteristics peculiar to either sex. Both men and women were gentle, cooperative, unaggressive, "maternal" in their relation to their families and "feminine" in their sexual relations. Among the Mundugumors both men and women were ruthless, fierce, aggressive, "masculine" in their sex behavior. Among the Tchambuli the strong differences between the traits of men and women were the opposite of the traditional difference among us. The women were aggressive, practical, efficient and sexually dominant, the men shy, dependent and charming. The author concludes that "the differences between individuals who are members of different cultures, like the differences between individuals within a culture are almost entirely to be laid to differences in conditioning, especially during early childhood, and the form of this conditioning is culturally determined."

The author's chief tools are taken from the psychoanalytic workshop. A resort to the Marxian workshop would have given her even better tools. At present her conclusions have little enriching significance. It is as though one were to observe that women in a socialist society like the U.S.S.R. are liberated human beings while in a fascist society they are degraded inferiors, without any knowledge of the causes. The best explanation the author can offer for the different characteristics of the people in the three primitive groups is that each group "chose" certain human traits as normal ones and "forced" all of its people into that mold.

Because of her desire to describe and, if necessary, reconstruct the original native culture before it was influenced by British intervention, the facts about the latter were mentioned in an offhand way which is quite startling. Very casually one learns that a considerable proportion of all the young men in a community came back from the gold fields to which they had been "recruited." Nothing further is told of the recruiting.

In a brilliant series of deductions from her work, Miss Mead shows that the attempt to restrict women's participation in the range of the world's work, to force her into a narrow psychological mold, to say to her, "this is how you must act if you really are a woman," has disastrous personality effects not only on woman but also on man. She pleads for a society in which no individual gift would be deprived of an opportunity for expression because of its presence in a woman rather than a man and shows that only in this way can a rich culture be realized. It is when trying to apply her conclusions to the modern world that her ignorance of Marxism becomes her weakness.

Not a word is said of the relation of the exploitation of woman as a sex to the exploitation of the working class as a whole. Communists have long known that just as the white worker cannot be free as long as his brother with a black skin is enslaved, so you cannot submerge one sex without distorting the other. Fascist Germany and Soviet Russia are both before us to show the connection between the status of women and the status of the working class. Fascism and the Soviet Union are both mentioned but no attempt is made to choose between them. To call for culture and opportunity for self-expression in the world today without warning of the menace of fascism with its reenslavement of women is blindness. Conversely there is nothing said of the rich flowering of culture in the Soviet Union where for the first time in history the formerly oppressed workers and farmers, the national minorities and the *women,* are participating equally and actively in the building of a socialist society. If science is to be more than a game, if it is to be a guide to action, the logic of Mead's work should compel her to look a little more steadily toward Communism. EMANUAL GLICK.

"Just-as-Good" Marxists

MARXISM: A Symposium by John Macmurray, John Middleton Murry, N. A. Holdaway and G. D. H. Cole. John Wiley and Sons. $2.

THE MEANING OF MARX, Edited by Sidney Hook, with an Introduction by Sherwood Eddy. Farrar and Rinehart. $1.

SINCE it is now *à la mode* to be a "Marxist," book publishers sensitive to the public's inclinations have begun to publish appropriate literature.

The symposium on Marxism by the four British gentlemen reveals that they all "embrace" the teachings of Marx. On closer view, it becomes manifest that this "embrace" has the effect of strangling every revolutionary element in these teachings. Of course this is done in the name of "modernizing" Marx's theories, "adjusting" them to circumstances he could not have foreseen, etc.—all the usual trappings of cunning opportunism.

Cole and Murry trot out the middle class as a kind of bogey-man: this is where Marx and the Communists fall down. The working class, you see, is not really able to make a revolution because its psychology is "bourgeois" and so we have fascism, the middle-class counter-revolution. The solution: unite these two classes in a "classless political organization" (Murry), which will attain socialism through "Parliamentary action" (Cole). What these writers offer, plainly, is the same old reformist, Social-Democratic policy meticulously decked in new verbiage.

In similar manner, Macmurray's treatment of dialectical materialism and Holdaway's analysis of the economics of capitalism, are shot through and through by the debilitating lack of clear class-lines. Thus, the latter describes "inevitability" as the "objective aspect of unconsciousness." This means that we can wait for the revolution with folded arms. Macmurray talks sadly of the possibility of the ruling class "rising to a consciousness of the truth and yielding to it" and ends by saying that it doesn't seem likely. If he had begun at this point, he might have written something worthwhile!

Much of the material in the slim volume on *The Meaning of Marx* appeared previously as magazine articles, which were dealt with in previous issues of THE NEW MASSES. (Analysis of the arguments of Dewey, Russell and M. R. Cohen.) The editor, Prof. Hook, "refutes" the arguments of his fellow contributors by way of prelude to his own more subtle attacks on the fundamentals of Marxism. The Professor reaches the acme of scientific scholarship when he asserts that Communists believe fascism to be inevitable and proves it by quoting from Walter Duranty!

When Engels, before the open grave of Marx, tried to sum up the whole life of his friend, he said, "Above all, Marx was a revolutionary." Considering from this angle the lucubrations contained in these two books, one is constrained to say of the authors that above all, they are not.

JACK LIBROME.

Brief Review

THE HANGING ON UNION SQUARE, by H. T. Tsiang. (Published by the author. Box 66, Station D., N. Y. C. 50c and $1.) An interesting experimental novel about the unemployed. Perhaps the first novel with a proletarian theme written in expressionistic technique.

CATHERINE: THE PORTRAIT OF OF AN EMPRESS, by Gina Kaus. Illustrated. (Viking Press. $3.50.) The June Literary Guild selection. Chiefly the sex life of the Russian empress, interpreted as a desire to masculate herself by feminizing her lovers in order to make up for childhood misery as an unwanted girl. Social and economic realities are omitted for this "absorbing" theme.

CENSORED! by Richard Park and Mark Marvin. (National Committee Against Censorship of the Theatre Arts. 5 cents.) An invaluable handbook. The authors analyze the recent wave of theatre terrorism and present a concrete plan of counter-attack. Required reading of all followers of the left-wing drama and indispensable to every theatre group unwilling to submit to legal and vigilante gag rule.

BURLINGTON DYNAMITE PLOT, by Walt Pickard. (International Labor Defense. 3 cents.) In simple, juicy prose a textile worker (who has been a "lint-head" since the age of nine) presents a first-hand story of one of the foulest company frame-ups in years. Don West, in his introduction, calls this pamphlet "a thrilling drama." It is, indeed, one of the most eloquent documents in American labor history.

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The Theatre

The Influence of Ibsen

(This is an excerpt from a forthcoming book on the technique of playwriting.)

HENRIK IBSEN is the architect of the modern drama. His influence is the determining factor in the theatre as we know it. We must therefore turn to the study of his plays (and also his very revealing notebooks) as the most complete storehouse of modern technical knowledge.

Since Ibsen the theatre has seen nothing new in creative technique—for the simple reason that there has been nothing new to be said. Today the stage deals with a limited range of material. The same or similar themes are repeated, shuffled and embroidered. Among these themes are variations of the Cinderella story, the revolt of youth against the family, the divorce problem, the young married couple trying to adjust themselves, the get-rich-quick story, the adolescent boy in love with an older woman, the commission and detection of crime, etc., etc. The approach to these themes is characterized by an identical point of view: emphasis on sex, a nostalgic rebellion against the conventions of a humdrum world, and mystic pessimism.

Both Philip Barry and Eugene O'Neill have written plays about a married woman who has a child by a man who is not her husband. Paul Hervieu, a distinguished French playwright of the last generation, expounded the same theme in *The Nippers* (1895) and expressed an almost identical point of view. Compare the final lines of Hervieu's play with those of *Strange Interlude:* in *The Nippers,* the woman says to her husband, "We are only two miserable beings and misery knows none but equals." At the close of *Strange Interlude,* Nina says, " . . . to die in peace! I'm so contentedly weary with life!" Marsden answers, speaking of himself as "dear old Charlie . . . who, passed beyond desire, has all the luck at last!"

The root of this is Ibsen. In him is found the highest development of the middle-class theatre—the dramatic growth which began with the rise of the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century and reached its final period at the close of the nineteenth century. Ibsen is the most significant representative of this final period. He dissects the middle class with surgical vigor—showing its bitterness, its inertia, its confused moral values. The people of his plays are the people of the suburbs of industrial cities. Shaw pointed this out in 1896, saying that Ibsen households could be found all around London: "Jump out of a train anywhere between Wimbledon and Haslemere; walk into the first villa you come to, and there you are!" The sick nostalgia of the middle class echoes in Oswald's terrifying cry in *Ghosts:* "Mother, give me the sun." Nina's furious preoccupation with sex in *Strange Interlude* is merely a pale replica of the tragedy of Hedda Gabler.

Many people will doubtless question this statement, maintaining that O'Neill's heroine is much more unconventional, more self-expressive—in a word, more modern—than Hedda. Undoubtedly this is true in some respects. Nina's sexual morality is much less inhibited than Hedda's. On the other hand Hedda is completely unmoral as far as ordinary standards of conduct are concerned. She sends a man to his death and burns his manuscript, without the slightest qualm of conscience. In this she resembles Nina, who has no conscience in pursuing her own emotional needs. There are a number of ways in which the two women are strikingly alike: both have extraordinarily dull husbands; both regard love as a right with which nothing can interfere; both are dominated by father-complexes; both have an intense neurotic craving for excitement; both have what O'Neill calls "a ruthless self-confidence"; both pursue their aims strictly within a conventional framework; both indicate a strong desire for comfort and luxury and at the same time both are super-idealists, hating everything which is (as Hedda says) "ludicrous and mean." The analogy might be pursued in much greater detail, but I think this is sufficient to show a basis for close comparison.

Ibsen's historical position is very clearly indicated in the special character of the technique which he perfected: instead of developing his action gradually, his plays begin *at a crisis.* The period of preparation and increasing tension is omitted. The curtain rises on the very brink of catastrophe. Clayton Hamilton says, "Ibsen caught his story very late in its career, and revealed the antecedent incident in little gleams of backward dialogue. Instead of compacting his exposition in the first act—according to the formula of Scribe—he revealed it little by little throughout the progress of the play." Ibsen's task lay in crystallizing the final psychological crisis of the bourgeois family. Being a great technician he has invented a method which exactly corresponds to the social character of his work.

Shaw is the most brilliant and most socially-minded dramatist of the period following Ibsen. Here again the technique reveals the inner character of the work. Shaw has not been able to go *beyond* Ibsen, to solve the contradictions inherent in the middle-class life around him. This tragic failure is reflected in Shaw's technique—the tendency to pure talk, the negation of action.

The theatre continues to rehash Ibsen. Imitating him lifelessly (and often unconsciously) dramatists are unable to make intelligent use of the splendid technical lessons to be gained from his plays.

It is interesting to note that Brunetiere writing in 1893, showed some awareness of the inherent weakness and nostalgia of the social life to which the theatre of his day was dedicated. In discussing the "exercise of the conscious will," he says: "People no longer know how to exert their wills, they say, and I am afraid they have some right to say it. We are broken-winded, as the poet says. We are abandoning ourselves."

Many playwrights of the past and present generation have, of course, continued to present the middle-class point of view with serene assurance, utterly unaware of the contradictions exposed by Ibsen and others. Their craftsmanship has also been serene and untroubled either by hope or despair. Perhaps the most interesting representative of this school is John Galsworthy.

Representing in every fibre of his being and of his work, the attitude of the British bourgeoisie, Galsworthy has expressed the prejudices and standards of this class with admirable clarity. Critical opinion has regarded Galsworthy as the very cream and perfection of unprejudiced social observation. Clayton Hamilton speaks of his "Olympian impartiality of mind in considering a social thesis—that God-like lack of special sympathy in regard to his characters."

What is this "Olympian impartiality of mind?" It simply means that Galsworthy gives completely honest expression to the narrowness and bigotry of his own class.

Barrett H. Clark, in praising *Strife* for its impartiality, reveals exactly how impartial it is: "Throughout the first scenes of the second act, the characters are laid bare with admirable clearsightedness and detachment of vision. If the poor are in a bad condition, it is to a certain extent the fault of their pride and dogged tenacity."

Strife ends with the direct statement that strikes are useless:

> Harness: A women dead, and the two best men broken!
>
> Tench (Staring at him, suddenly excited): D'you know, Sir—those terms, they're the *very same* we drew up together, you and I, and put to both sides before the fight began? All this—and—and what for?
>
> Harness (In a slow grim voice): That's where the fun comes in.

In these days of economic tension, this sounds suspiciously like the familiar arguments for injunctions, compulsory arbitration and forced labor. Galsworthy is convinced that every problem can be solved by the good will and good sportsmanship of the British upper class. He is unruffled because he ignores the possibility of any serious disagreement. The definiteness, the technical austerity of Galsworthy's plays springs from the depth of his conservatism. He is sure that his own social standards are absolute.

Many others still hold this faith. But such a faith is uncreative, because it is unrealistic. Drama deals with conflict, which implies the possibility of change. If people believe that the world is static, the "exercise of the conscious will" tends to atrophy.

JOHN HOWARD LAWSON.

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The Screen

No "Escape" for Negro Artists

PAUL ROBESON has been living in self-imposed exile in England for a number of years. He left the United States because he could no longer bear the humiliations and discriminations heaped upon him. Of a piece with these personal indignities were the limitations that hedged him in as an actor. For the traditional American theatre has no place for the Negro actor who refuses to play the fool or lend his talents to anti-Negro propaganda.

Robeson hoped to escape these things in England. To a certain extent he has been successful because the lack of a pressing Negro problem at home does not require the English to impose overly stringent Jim Crow restrictions on the few Negroes who live there.

But *Sanders of the River,* a London film now playing at the Rivoli Theatre, is ample proof that Robeson did not solve his artistic problems through flight. England has large colonies peopled by blacks who are becoming restive. What could be more timely than a Great Work of Art depicting the natives as untutored and bloodthirsty savages held in check by fatherly English overlords? There is no need to tell the story of *Sanders of the River.* It is adequately billed as the story of how "three white men held a war-crazed empire (of three million blacks) at bay." Within those limits the film manages to repeat every known stale cliche about the White Man's Burden.

Even though Robeson is cast in the role of the stoolpigeon native chief, Bosambo, who betrays his own people to the English, his robust personality holds the film together and gives it some semblance of inner unity. Leslie Banks is Sanders, that artificial stage, screen and fiction Englishman who serves his king, come hell or high water, and he does the best he can against those overwhelming odds. Nina Mae McKinney, who is all sweetness and light as Lilongo, Bosambo's wife, manages to act enough like Norma Shearer to inject the proper sickly love motif so beloved in London and Hollywood. The photography is fairly adequate but bogs down in the mass scenes, a fault intimately connected with the fact that the director was forced to depict the tribal dances as hateful outbursts. Such an attitude precludes any genuinely sympathetic portrayal.

At that the film manages to be fairly revealing. Bosambo (Robeson) is depicted as a native educated at a missionary college and with a penchant for petty law breaking. Such men *do* make good stoolpigeons and they *are* the choice of the English as underlings. There is even a fugitive reference to the facts that Sanders visits the tribes only to collect taxes and that he has his "spies everywhere." There is another brief moment of honesty when the Old King—the only fighter in the lot—asks Robeson: "Whose *dog* are *you?*"

Even more revealing are the comments of the English critics. *"Sanders of the River* if shown abroad will bring no discredit on Imperial authority," remarked the Tory London Times. The London Daily Herald, organ of "Labor" suggested that "if we could only give every subject race a native king (like Mr. Robeson) problems of self-government might be largely solved." Exactly!

Robeson is said to be very much displeased with the completed film and is quoted to the effect that he did not realize what he was doing at the time. His refusal to take a curtain call at the premiere in London is construed as a mild protest. That is all very well but it is hard to believe that Robeson was so childlike. After all, the Edgar Wallace stories from which the play was adapted were available.

It would be better for Robeson to face the problem squarely. There is no doubt that

"And he's the most *radical* thing you ever heard of. Why he's already talking of a *Fourth* International."

Gardner Rea

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he has sickened of the things he has been forced to do on the American and English stage. But that won't help until he is honest enough to admit that English and American producers will not, indeed cannot afford to, make an honest picture dealing with so-called subject races. The whole future of the English capitalist structure, with which the film makers are allied, depends to a great degree on the maintenance of "imperial authority" just as the American structure depends on "keeping the Negro in his place."

The problems facing the Negro people in this country can't be solved by the flight of talented artists. And it turns out that those who flee can't even solve their own problems in that manner. Robeson's place is here where his talents could play a large part in building a revolutionary theatre which can afford to deal honestly with Negroes and Africans. If he wants to make an effective protest against *Sanders of the River* he might hurry back and lead the picket lines that ought to greet the film wherever it is shown.

LOREN MILLER.

At the Cameo

The Private Life of Peter Vinogradov (Amkino) is brilliantly acted; it contains three of four sequences that are as imaginative and clever as anything that has been done in the cinema; it contains some illuminating scenes of contemporary Moscow; there are many things in the film that are of value to film students and workers; it has a beautifully coordinated musical score by the young Soviet composer, Knipper. Yet the film as a whole is a failure, it just doesn't come off. It is doubly disappointing since the film is composed of so many good individual elements and that one expected a great deal of Macheret, the director. His earlier film, *Men and Jobs* was in many ways brilliant.

One of the new series of Soviet films depicting the life of the "new man" against the background of socialist construction, *Peter Vinogradov* is also the initial film about the personal life of the Young Communist, student and worker. It attempts to tell the story of three comrades who come from a provincial town to work and study in Moscow. The three friends working together, have different tastes and inclinations: Peter is a potential inventor, Senia is a musician and Kostia devotes his leisure to sports. It was evident that the director's intention was to portray the development of three typical young men in a socialist society. There was an opportunity to develop the individual characters and their relation to each other. Unfortunately this is done very superficially. As a result the rest of the film tells about some slight, sometimes pleasant adventures of these three young men and their two girl-friends, projected against a background of modern Moscow. There is an ending that is too pat, almost unreal.

I don't mean to give the impression that the film is worthless. As I pointed out before, there are specific things in this film that alone make it worthwhile. Peter Vinogradov's reading of *Hamlet* in a rowboat on the Moscow River, is something that will not easily be forgotten. But *Chapayev, The Youth of Maxim,* the forthcoming *Peasants* (not yet released)—and *The Song of Happiness*—one of the most beautiful and lyrical of all the recent Soviet films (also about the new youth)—have established a standard that cannot be ignored.

PETER ELLIS.

Between Ourselves

JOHN STRACHEY has written an article on the recent startling changes in the political situation in Great Britain. "The British Labor Party Surrenders" will appear in THE NEW MASSES next week.

Julia O'Connor's sketch in this issue is the result of a "vacation" she recently spent in one of the National Parks. She is a teacher.

Future quarterly issues of THE NEW MASSES will be devoted, in turn, to one phase or another of revolutionary culture. It is planned to make the next quarterly issue a revolutionary art number and to this end a committee of artists will shortly be organized to gather and select the material. Other quarterlies will deal with poetry, the essay, etc.

A good many letters come to THE NEW MASSES which contain exceedingly interesting material, often vividly expressed, but which we have to discard because they are anonymous. It is not imperative that the name of the writer be published with each communication, but it is always necessary that the editors know who the writer is. This is especially true in regard to controversial matters.

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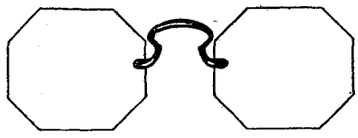

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(Suggested as a lyric for a musical show with acknowledgement to the backward march of the liberals in Andreyev's play "The Rape of the Sabine Women.")

* * *

We are the liberals,
tried and true;
we read the New Republic
and the Nation, too,
We're not dogmatic
and we keep an open mind:
a conclusion is something
we never can find.
The world's at the cross-roads!
We're needed! So—
boldly into action
let us go:

(Chorus) One step forward
and two steps back:
that's the method
of our attack.
We're too superior
to take any side,
we keep our minds
and mouths open wide.
In the class-struggle
we're neutral, too—
so far above it
we're hidden from view
(it's far more convenient
and safer, how true)!
One step forward
and two steps back:
that is our liberal
plan of attack.

We believe in
sitting on the fence.
Above the battle
the view's immense:
on the one hand
it is very, very true;
but on the other
it's obvious too.
The world's at the cross-roads
We're needed! So—
boldly into action
let us go.

(Chorus) One step forward
and two steps back:
that's the method
of our attack!

(From The Daily Worker)

You see here the rhyme and reason of why a liberal looks so poisonous to a sincere and active radical. . . . If you know one of these "open-minded" marchers, you can save him! Give him a copy of NEW MASSES quick—and see that he takes weekly doses of its clear thinking and decisive approach to the political, economic and social issues of the day. . . . It will be a REAL step forward, and he won't want to go back.

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